

24 • THE BLACKFEET RESERVATION AND ITS PEOPLE

493
311
[241] Ranching and farming are the major economic pursuits of the people of these counties. The northern and western portions contain excellent natural grazing areas and are extensively used by both residents and outsiders for grazing of beef cattle, sheep, and horses. The eastern third of Glacier county and the greater portion of Pondera are subject to lesser amounts of rainfall than the more westerly portions but have more frost free days, and have been utilized to a greater extent for both dry and irrigation farming. Principal crops are wheat, barley, and hay.

315
434
313 Oil and natural gas production and refining are important industries, with the principal producing fields lying just to the east of the reservation limits. Producing wells on the reservation in both the northeast and southeast corners may be tapping these same fields. Oil is also being pumped in the northwest part of the reservation and there has been revived interest recently in exploring the potential of the western foothill strip. Oil lease money and bonus payments for leasing rights have provided a fluctuating but important prop to the local economy. There has been little manufacturing or lumbering, although the foothill strip, adjoining national forests and Glacier Park, has a lumber potential that is slowly being realized as the tribal mill in Browning increases its lumber output and new wood products industries are being attracted to the reservation.

433
[452]
[651] The population, with an economic base of beef, wool, grain, and hay, also supports businesses, services, schools, churches, and government. Banking and financing institutions are available in Cur Bank, Browning, Conrad and Valier. Dependent children, and also those who are needy, aged, blind, or disabled are provided for by the county public welfare system established by state law and financed by tribal, county, state, and federal funds.

631
[641] Like the other people of Glacier and Pondera counties the tribal members are citizens of the United States and of the state of Montana. They participate in national and state politics and in the county, precinct, school district, and town governments according to their places of residence. Reservation boundaries, it will be seen, create an added dimension. They overlies the county system but do not obliterate, change, or directly affect it. Democrats, Republicans, independents, and disinterested voters play their respective parts at all levels of politics.

871
872
873
318
771
575 The reservation region is served by the Montana State Public Schools system. County school districts, with one or two exceptions, cross reservation lines. The public schools that have Indian pupils receive federal support under the Federal Impact Area Act (PL 874) (U.S. Statutes LXIV, 1, 1950:1100) and the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 (U.S. Statutes XLVIII, 1934:596) which in differing ways provide for payments to public schools in lieu of the taxes not received from Indian lands held in trust. Elementary schools, varying greatly in size, plant, and staff, are found in all settled and rural areas, and high schools are located at Browning, Cur Bank, Valier and Conrad.

Religious and other organizations here are similar to those found elsewhere in rural regions of the United States. Many denominations of Christian churches have followers here and each town has one or several churches. Similarly, one or several religious and secular lodges, service clubs, veterans' organizations, youth clubs, ranch, business, trade, and labor organizations are found in the communities of the area.

30 • THE BLACKFEET RESERVATION AND ITS PEOPLE

423 The allotment acts provided that the inheritance laws of the state should govern the distribution of allotted lands upon the death of an allottee. The laws of Montana recognize disposal of property by will, and the federal government recognizes the transfer of trust title, in whole or in part, by will. In the absence of a will, state laws define the succession and the share of an estate each heir shall receive. The result of fifty years or more of practice has been an increased fragmentation of original allotments to the point where an allotment may have as many as fifty owners, or have been portioned out into a series of plots too small to serve economic ends. The B.I.A. recently estimated that about 475,000 acres of reservation trust land had multiple owners (Blackfeet Agency FY 1972 Budget and Program Memorandum). The agency is charged with the duty of keeping records of such changes in ownership, and with leasing such lands for the benefit of the owners. A lease requires acquiescence of many owners and the monies received must be credited to the accounts of all heirs. Until more people make wills, and more frequently pass undivided ownership to fewer people, the land fragmentation will continue to snowball and the work load of the agency will increase in proportion. This is the "heirship land" problem that plagues the economies of most Indian reservations where tribal lands were allotted to individual owners.

426 The trust status of the land makes it poor security for mortgages so it is difficult for the owner of such land to borrow money for short or long-term operating expenses and capital improvements. The inability to secure ready financing, the multiple ownership situation, plus other factors that will be introduced later, have contributed to the present economic condition of the tribal members.

In 1962 I wrote:

433 On February 1960 in an area in which the predominant industries are agriculture and stock raising, it was reported [in unpublished tribal documents] that 241 only 40 tribal members are farm operators, and of this number it is estimated that perhaps only 10 are farming sufficient acreage to be considered an economic unit. The farming family's income must be supplemented by wage work. One [434] hundred and fifty families of tribal members are listed as ranchers, with an average of 85 head of beef cattle, or equivalent in sheep. A conservative estimate of the stock required for an economic unit is 100 head, so many of these people 433 may also need supplemental income. It was estimated that another 27 families are self-supporting, or have received the financing which should make them self-supporting, in business, other non-agricultural enterprises, or as regularly employed wage earners. 463

426 In a credit appraisal of an estimated 1,200 Blackfeet families, 700 families were listed as having poor security risks. These latter had neither the experience nor the aptitude, neither the training nor the inclination, to operate a going enterprise or meet the standards of financial responsibility set by the council for prospective clients of a Revolving Loan Fund. These figures indicate that approximately 983 families of the tribe are unable to be self-supporting and depend upon casual labor, income from the leasing of lands if they have land, tribal per-capita payments and welfare for minimum subsistence. [434]

311 Figures on non-Indian use of reservation land reveal the gap between Indian use and the potential of the region. Seventy-five non-Indian operators lease grazing land for stock enterprises, with an average of 5,067 acres each as compared to an average of 2,666 among the 150 Indian operators. One hundred seventy-five non-Indian farmers cultivate farms that average 560 acres each as compared to an average farm size of 200 acres for the 40 Indian farmers. The non-Indians are 241

RESERVATION POPULATION AND ECONOMY • 31

operating economic units on land leased from Indian owners. Many more Indian families could be self-supporting on their own land if problems of land ownership, financing, and training are ever solved, yet it is obvious that this land base is insufficient to support the population by ranching and farming alone (McFee 1962:40-41).

Comparable current figures are not available, but it is my impression that little has changed. Fagg & Associates (1970:71) report on 713 families of which 392 have incomes of less than \$3,000 (median \$2,716). This differs from another 1968 report showing about 62 percent of 1,830 families earning under \$3,000 and a median annual income of \$1,700 (Blackfeet Indian Reservation—City of Browning "Model City" Application 1968:41).

This does not mean that nothing has changed; it has. The population has increased, some people have improved their lot, and others have fallen on hard times. New ranches and farms have been started, others are in the process of breaking up. The sum of all this, however, is a rather bleak economic picture for the reservation as a whole for which there is no simple explanation. It reflects legal, social, cultural, and historical factors that I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4.

The reservation and tribal organization bring a member into a further regional political alignment, in many respects akin to a municipal political division. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and subsequent legislation have given to the tribe a broader range of powers than is usually enjoyed by a local jurisdiction. But for a few limitations and some federal review, the tribe is autonomous.

Tribal courts are given jurisdiction over civil and criminal actions brought by an Indian against another Indian. The right of jurisdiction in the case of the "ten major crimes" committed by Indians on Indians reservations has been reserved by the federal courts, but the balance of law and order matters are under tribal control. These are not subject to state or county regulation unless specifically turned over to such authorities, or shared concurrently with them, by an act of the tribal council and by an acceptance of these obligations by the county or state (Federal Indian Law 1958:319).

Non-Indians living on the reservation are subject to county and state laws and enforcement. They are affected, in addition, by tribal regulations. The tribe can regulate land use and impose taxes on nonmembers in the form of business licenses, camping fees, and hunting and fishing fees.

This overlapping jurisdiction in the area of law and order makes for a complex problem of law enforcement and requires guarded cooperation between tribal, county, state, and federal enforcement agencies. A breach of peace or a crime must be analyzed according to where it happened and who was involved in order to determine what level of enforcement has jurisdiction. Do you call the tribal police, the sheriff, the state highway patrol, or perhaps the F.B.I. agent? Actions by other than the correct officers must be sanctioned by immediate or previous agreement among the various governing bodies.

The tribal and federal regulations also affect nonmembers whenever these latter become involved in leases or other financial dealings with Indians, or where nonmembers become a party, injured or the injurer, in legal disputes, crime, or misdemeanors with members of the tribe.

32 • DEPENDENCY AND READAPTATION: 1884-1970

intermittently active among the Piegan for several decades, but Father Imoda had discounted their success at conversion prior to 1870 (Bradley 1923:316). In 1890 the Holy Family Mission school was opened in the Two Medicine valley (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1890:115) and in the following years Christianity gradually gained predominance over the Blackfeet religion. In the meantime, agents, missionaries, and teachers actively combatted any expression of many elements of Indian culture.

Sun dances, Indian mourning, Indian medicine, beating of the tom-tom, gambling, wearing of Indian costumes . . . selling, trading, exchanging or giving away anything issued to them have been prohibited, while other less pernicious practices, such as horse-racing, face-painting, etc., are discouraged (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1894:159).

In addition, the children were forbidden to speak the Blackfeet language in the schools (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1893:174). Several informants, who attended either agency or mission schools during the first decades of the twentieth century, recall being punished for "speaking Indian" in the schools or dormitories.

The suppression of elements of culture that the white men thought were inconsistent with civilization did not eliminate the practices, but did hamper and limit their expression and transmission. The readaptation process was slow, but the agents usually found some grounds for optimism.

1905-1920 Progress in stock raising continued through 1905 and 1906. The agent persistently attempted to keep encroaching herds off Indian pastures, and continued a practice begun in 1904 of issuing leases and permits to both white and Indian stockmen for grazing privileges on tribal lands.⁹

The economic growth was again reversed by a severe winter in 1906 and 1907. The losses among the stock were heavy and "impoverished some of the industrious and worthy members of the tribe" (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1907:13-14). An investigation into conditions on the reservation was ordered, and the investigating officer's report sheds some light on the progress of economic adaptation to that time:

He reported that the mixed bloods—about three eighths of the tribe—were able generally to take care of themselves, but the full bloods as a rule had little knowledge of ranch or farm work, were unwilling to stay a reasonable length of time in one place or to work where they could not be in parties, were very apt to quit on little or no provocation and regardless of the interests of the employer, . . . (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1907:13-14).

A federal act of March 1907 provided for the allotment in severalty of the Blackfeet reservation. Each tribal member would receive 280 acres of grazing land and 40 acres of irrigable land, or 320 acres of grazing land only. Surplus lands would be opened for public settlement. An appropriation was included for the construction of an irrigation system for the lands to be allotted; the money

⁹ The first such permit recorded was for a five-year lease of 2,400 acres to the Conrad Investment Company (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1904:77). An increasing number of leases are reported for most of the following years.

THE PERIOD OF DEPENDENCY, 1884-1935 • 53

appropriated to be reimbursed from proceeds of the sale of the surplus reservation lands (U.S. Statutes XXXIV 1907:1015, 1035). Allotment surveys and work on the irrigation projects were carried on during the two years following the enactment of the legislation (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1908:61; 1909:4-5). Irrigation construction provided an additional source of labor and income for many Indians. 657
425
312

The last annuities under the agreement of 1896 were paid in 1908. Henceforth Indian rations and aid were dependent upon tribal income, reimbursable government appropriations, and occasional relief measures. The statistics from the agents' reports for the next few years give a picture of continuing economic progress for the tribe as a whole. 657
424

The First World War relieved some of the pressure on reservation resources—good weather and abundant crops prevailed generally until 1917; livestock and produce found a ready market at high prices; and many Blackfeet were drawn into the armed forces, thereby reducing the local labor force. But all of this does not reflect accurately the condition of individuals. A process was going on that was slowly segmenting the population. 423
178

First, the population was growing—from 2,063 in 1905 (U.S. Board Ind. Comm. 1905: facing 16) to 2,957 in 1920—and becoming increasingly hybridized. White men were marrying the Indians' daughters. The full-blood Blackfeet loved the grandchildren these marriages produced, but they were "half-breeds," and hard to accept as "real Indians." Of the total, in 1920, less than half, or 1,141 persons, were full-bloods, while the balance were mixed. Among the mixed-blood population, 956 were $\frac{1}{2}$ or less Indian (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1920:67). Secondly, the individually owned herds were growing and the returns from this business were high, but as the superintendent wrote in 1918, 3 percent of the tribe owned 95 percent of the stock when he reported for duty in 1915 (U.S. Congress Sen. Report 451 1918:3). An investigator for the Board of Indian Commissioners, in November of 1918, found that the full-bloods were divided as to their capabilities as stockmen. He reported that "about one-third of the 300 and more full-blood families is incapable of handling cattle." Another third probably could become cattlemen if properly instructed and supervised, and the balance of the full-bloods were doing well at the industry. A number of mixed-bloods had built prosperous looking ranches and had had "marked success at this business" (U.S. Board Ind. Comm. 1918:352-353). 162
563
231
231
563

Other forces were already at work that were to alter the uneven progress of the Blackfeet. Beginning in 1917, the Indian Bureau began pressing for the rapid reduction of Indian dependency by the removal of "competent" Indians from trust status (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1917:3-5). By 1920, 1,011 Blackfeet had been awarded fee patent title to 312,250 acres (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1920:171) under a policy that was to result in the alienation of reservation lands and the creation of a large number of landless Indians. 657
425

A drought cycle began in 1917 and continued for four years (U.S. Board Ind. Comm. 1921:55; Whetstone 1936:145-146). The end of the war, in 1917, resulted in the loss of markets. The drought and falling prices brought bankruptcy to both cattlemen and farmers in this part of Montana by 1919 and 1920. Veterans 457

54 • DEPENDENCY AND READAPTATION: 1884-1970

457 returned to swell the labor force. The Blackfeet shared in this change. The white homesteaders and cattlemen could abandon their places and go elsewhere; the Indian could not and had to rely again upon the government (U.S. Board Ind. Comm. 1921:56). The Indian, however, did have the agency to turn to, an advantage not shared by the white man. During the winter of 1920-1921 rations were issued to "over 2,000, or about two-thirds of the entire population" (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1922:12). Several informants reported that their families and friends were ruined at this time. A few were able to make a comeback, but many abandoned their ranches and did not try again.

425 In 1919, a second allotment of reservation lands was authorized in the annual appropriation bill for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (U.S. Statutes XII 1919:16-17). After this no further allotments in severalty were made to the Blackfeet Indians.

433 The Blackfeet generally were dependent again. Thirty-five years of attempted economic readaptation were behind them. They had tried farming and found it [241] unrewarding. They had found satisfaction in stock raising, but only a few were [231] able to succeed at this in the face of cold winters, periods of drought, and the fluctuating markets regulated by national and international conditions. Large numbers of younger men had been employed in seasonal labor, railway and irrigation construction work, harvesting and ranch labor and had served in the armed forces. 464 These jobs provided some cash income but little training for long-range adjustment. Unused allotments were leased to others to provide another small cash [434] return to the Indian owner. Many people depended entirely upon the rations issued [427] and the cash that could be earned by wage work or leasing of land.

433 Periodic crop failures and price fluctuations made it difficult for the Indian to understand or to develop faith in long-range plans. Each government program offered future rewards and security, but the promised rewards never materialized; [177] the only tangible things were cash, rations, and relief. The white man's values of thrift and hard work had been developed and maintained by a better than average experience of success; few Blackfeet, by 1920, had experienced enough consistent reward to become imbued with these values. Every ten years or so their best efforts had resulted in failure.

1920-1935 The next fifteen years were in many ways a repetition of the the past, and reinforced more than they changed the expectation patterns. Montana farmers, generally, experienced a severe depression during this time (Montana Almanac 1957:122) and this was capped by the national depression and the droughts of the Dust Bowl years that began in 1929 and 1930 (Toole 1959:240).

657 In 1921 a new and dedicated agent, Frank C. Campbell, began a "Five 179 Year Program" of subsistence farming and economic development financed by reimbursable Indian bureau funds. He visited each Indian home and by consultation won support for his program. The Blackfeet were given a sense of participating in the planning of their own economy. The agent consulted with them and made a place for indigenous leaders with whom the people could discuss and resolve their problems (U.S. Board Ind. Comm. 1923:47; 1925:22-23).

THE PERIOD OF DEPENDENCY, 1884-1935 • 55

Campbell remained with them until 1929. His program benefited many people, but others wanted more independence. They wanted to restock and operate their ranches, to continue their own operations with a minimum of governmental interference (Ewers 1958:322-323). Nevertheless, the Five Year Programs gave many persons a sense of accomplishment and helped carry the Indians through a period of widespread hard times. 657 179

The wholesale granting of competency and fee patents was halted in 1926 when it was recognized that "the lands of a vast majority of Indians who had been given absolute control of their allotments [had] passed from Indian ownership in various ways . . ." (U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1926:10-11). 425

The cycle of success and failure was not broken by the Five Year Plans, however. The enthusiasm of both the Indians and the agents died down during the years between 1929 and 1935 and the greater number of the Blackfeet returned to economic dependency (Ewers 1958:323). 423 179

In 1933 the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) programs were established to meet national unemployment and the benefits were extended to Indian reservations (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1937:218). Like the irrigation construction of earlier years, these programs provided a source of seasonal cash labor, an important prop to the economy, but one that provided little training for permanent employment on the reservation. 657 433

At this point in Blackfeet adaptation, new national Indian policies were being formulated. The Meriam Report, a monumental study of the Indian problems published in 1928, questioned the whole doctrine of assimilation of the Indians. 648

He who wishes to merge into the social and economic life of the prevailing civilization of this country should be given all practicable aid and advice in making the necessary adjustments. He who wants to remain an Indian and live according to his old culture should be aided in doing so (Meriam 1928:28).

This, and many other of the recommendations, became official policy with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934 (U.S. Statutes XLVIII 1934:984). The act provided, among other things, for the cessation of allotment of Indian land, a limitation on the sale of restricted Indian land to other than tribal members, and the establishment of a revolving loan fund from which Indian corporations could borrow to further either tribal or individual enterprises. Tribes were authorized to organize and to adopt a constitution, and those who organized were given broad powers of self-government previously denied to them. Organized tribes were also empowered to incorporate and manage tribal properties and income. Actions of both the political and business organizations were subject to approval and review by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In addition, the traditional cultures were given recognition for the first time. A circular sent to all agencies in 1934 illustrates the sharp reversal from previous communications about Indian cultural practices:

648 No interference with Indian religious life or expression will hereafter be tolerated . . . and it is desirable that Indians be bilingual. . . . The Indian arts are to be prized, nourished, and honored (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1934:90).

The Indians were to have a choice, and to be allowed to play some part in decisions about their future development.

The Period of Self-Government, 1935-1970

642 The Blackfeet Constitution and the Blackfeet Corporate Charter were accepted and approved in 1935. The population continued to grow: the report for 1935 lists the membership of the Blackfeet Tribe as 3,962, of which 561 were living outside the reservation jurisdiction (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1935:163). 161 162 The economy improved slowly after the bad years of the early thirties. The stockmen, in particular, were aided by a provision for a repayment cattle pool authorized in 1934 (see U.S. Sec't. Interior 1937:212-213 for repayment in kind program, and 1944:241 for a review of the program). A man could build a herd by borrowing cattle from the pool and repaying in kind from the increase.

231 The Johnson-O'Malley Act (U.S. Statutes XLVIII 1934:956) passed in 658 1934 and amended in 1936 (U.S. Statutes XLIX 1936:1498) authorized the Secretary of the Interior to contract with a state or other political units, and with 659 schools, colleges, and private corporations for educational and medical services, agricultural assistance, social welfare, and relief for Indians. The Annual Report 871 for 1934 stated that the Browning schools were assuming the task of educating the Blackfeet children from that district (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1934:85).

433 The majority of the Blackfeet still were attempting to readapt to the immediate present, to find success in a new economic endeavor. They were pressed 177 to close a wide cultural gap in a short period of time, and to make things more difficult, the national economy would not stand still. Ranching and farming were changing in both production and marketing practices. A writer for the *Montana Almanac* noted a trend away from subsistence farming in the 1920s as homestead holdings proved to be too small for efficient farm and ranch operations, especially with the increasing use of power machinery in subsequent years (1957:202).

433 The Indian's future on small subsistence farms of 80 acres, or on a ranch using a 360 to 420 acre grazing allotment, was not promising. A successful operation 231 required the use of leased land and adequate capital. The heirship status of individual trust lands made leasing difficult, and trust restrictions inhibited 241 the mortgaging of such lands. The day of slowly building a ranch or farm from a cow, some seed, and hard work was disappearing. Few Blackfeet were established sufficiently in the 1930s to build and maintain a remunerative enterprise.

434 From 1936 through 1940 general drought conditions continued in the region (U.S., Indians at Work IV, 7 1936:37, 8 1936:37-39; Toole 1959:240— for Montana from 1929 to 1939). A few men held onto their farms and ranches, but most were forced to rely on wages from occasional labor and welfare payments. 795 One report stated that general poverty was the lot of ¾ of the Blackfeet people in 1936 (U.S., Indians at Work IV, 4, 1936:38).

THE PERIOD OF SELF-GOVERNMENT, 1935-1970 • 57

An additional source of unearned income was provided when the Indians were declared eligible for Social Security benefits by an act of 1936 (U.S. Statutes XLIX 1936:620). This provided categorical aid to the needy, blind, aged, and the dependent children. In 1939, 91 old persons, 186 children, and 3 blind persons on the Blackfeet reservation received this help (U.S. Statistical Report 1939:15). 434
657

From about 1936 on, the impact of modern medicine began to be felt by the Blackfeet. The agency physician reported an increased desire for obstetric service, "an increase from an average of ten a year to 127 in the fiscal year for 1936" (U.S. Indians at Work IV, 4, 1936:39). A new hospital was opened in 1937,¹⁸ and during the fiscal year 1940 a staff of twelve served 1,181 patients in addition to providing dispensary treatment to 5,204 cases. Five field employees administered to an additional 4,945 (U.S. Ind. Affairs Stat. Supplement 1940:82). C.C.C. nurses and Red Cross workers were also tending to the health of the Blackfeet (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1937:218). The medicine men were losing their hold. By 1959 informants reported that all the Indians used the Public Health Service hospital and medicines. Only a few medicine men were left and while they did some curing, they too went to the white doctor on occasion. 758
[844]
[742]
[759]
[756]
[756]

The tribal council attempted to further self-help improvement projects using revolving loan funds appropriated by Congress. The Office of Indian Affairs encouraged other enterprises by providing farm and home extension workers to advise the farmers and ranchers, and to organize women's community clubs for instruction in homemaking. The extension agents encouraged the growth of 4-H clubs to teach agriculture, stock raising and homemaking to the boys and girls (see reports in U.S. Indians at Work III, 12, 1936:43; and in U.S. Comm. Ind. Affairs 1936:179-184; 1937:211-217). 657
654

By 1941, the eve of World War II, the Blackfeet had made but slow recovery. The long-range economic problems had not been solved. They, like other Indians, were still leasing the land to others rather than using it themselves (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1941:451-452). The C.C.C. remained an important economic prop. 433

The war years, 1942-1945, had far-reaching effects on the Blackfeet. The C.C.C. program was suspended in 1942 (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1943:317), but several hundred young men and women served in the armed forces and worked in defense plants around the country (Ewers 1958:324). The "greatest exodus of Indians from reservations that has ever taken place" occurred during the war years (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1944:237). Indians were meeting other Americans, learning new skills, and seeing more of the outside world. Ready markets and higher prices for farm products coincided with increased rainfall to bring general prosperity to the Montana farmers and ranchers (Toole 1959:241), and the Blackfeet shared in this. 722
433
[467]
[777]

Like all past periods of activity and increased economic advance, this one met reversals after the war. The greater number of the Indians returned to the 433
727

¹⁸ Reported under construction (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1936:175); all hospitals under construction in 1936 were reported completed in 1937 (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1937:234).

433
727 reservation when the military forces were demobilized and the war industries were closed (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1946:353). Wage work fell off and a "downward trend in family incomes set in" (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1946:351).

The young people returned with money to spend, but the opportunities for investment were scarce. Few of them owned land with which to start a ranch or farm. They had the money to build new homes, but again no land of their own upon which to build. Not many had the experience and motivation to overcome these handicaps.

425 While the Indians were readjusting to peace time reservation life, the general U.S. population was expanding, both in numbers and in movement of population. The demands for new land revived pressures for the removal of trust restrictions on Indian land (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1951:368-369). Once again there was an increase of fee patent awards and the sale and alienation of more land.

654 The council and the agency persevered in endeavors to resolve the reservation economic problems. Stock raising and agricultural programs were initiated, and national programs for relocation and on-the-job training for Indians were pushed. By 1949 the cattle holdings of the Blackfeet had increased to 14,678 (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1950:356), but the figures, as usual, do not tell the whole story. As in the past, only a few were able to keep a ranch going over time to remain as one of the 150 families engaged in stock raising in 1959. Accounts of informants' experiences during this period show some of the personal and tribal problems of adaptation during the postwar years.

231
426
433 I started years ago to build a herd with repayment cattle. At that time they accepted repayment as a man was able to make it. I took ten years to pay back fifty head. Then they made changes and required that repayment be made within two years. One bad year made this impossible. 1947 was a bad year. The people needed hay to get their cattle through the winter. The government wouldn't finance feeding. Then, because the Indian wasn't able to feed, they came in and hauled away the cattle. I managed to borrow \$700 from a friend in town and made it through the winter.

—a presently successful rancher, mixed-blood, leasing 2,400 acres.

231
433 My father had a ranch and I helped him from the time I left school until the war. After the war I got a job in California and stayed there until my father asked me to come back and help with the ranch. I worked on the ranch for two years, then my father, who was getting old, sold off his stock in 1948 and I went to work for another rancher.

—a steadily employed farmhand, ¼ Blackfeet.

I had a good herd and then got sick and couldn't take care of them. Nobody would. Some were stolen so I sold them all.

—a full-blood pensioner.

241
433 My father bought this land and is leasing more to farm. I dropped out of school to help and now I'm running the farm. My father got a F.H.A. loan to improve the house and we're doing good.

—a young farmer, ⅓ Blackfeet.

241
231
433 I was farming, had 80 acres of grain but that wasn't enough to make a living. Then I ranched on the 580 acres. I had sixty-five head, including calves—loan cattle. The loan requirements insist that you stay with the cattle, but I took wage

THE PERIOD OF SELF-GOVERNMENT, 1935-1970 • 39

jobs to make enough to live on, so they took my cattle. Just didn't have enough land for farming or ranching.

—a seasonally employed construction worker, $\frac{1}{16}$ Blackfeet.

I have about thirty-five head I'm running with family stock on other people's land. These are loan cattle. I've been taking five to ten head a year and haven't been pressed for payment. Just pay them back when I can. The family helps take care of them. I want to lease some land but I find it hard to do. The Indian gets priority but somehow it seems hard to get land away from the white lease-holders.

—a regularly employed carpenter, $\frac{1}{4}$ Blackfeet.

I was raised on a ranch. Before the war I was living and working for my uncle who had cattle. I had some loan cattle and was just getting started. Then I was called into the Army. They only kept me six months, but no one would take care of my cattle while I was gone so I turned back the loan cattle and sold the rest. After the war I came to town and worked for wages.

—an irregularly employed laborer, full-blood.

This is the way these men see the problems, and whether or not they are correct in their appraisal is beside the point. The important thing is that, for various reasons, many men failed to make a go of ranching and farming while a few others did. The successful ones appear to have had family support. Only by cooperation, in which some of the family took wage earning jobs while others tended the ranch, were most enterprises kept going.

The pressure for ending trust status of Indian land culminated in the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 108 in 1953 calling for the "earliest possible" termination of federal responsibilities over specified Indian tribes (U.S. Congr. Record XCIX, 8, 1953:9968). The Blackfeet were not included among the Indians to be "freed," but the resolution was interpreted as a statement of intent to end rapidly the trust status of all Indians. In response to this resolution, the

issuance of patents in fee nearly doubled as compared with the previous year . . . while the disposition of allotted holdings through advertised sale more than tripled . . . (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1953:24).

A brief moratorium in effect during 1958 was lifted the following year "in compliance with a congressional request. . ." (U.S. Sec't. Interior 1959:253). The Blackfeet continued to lose reservation land to nonmembers.

While federal and tribal authorities were attempting to increase the industrial capacity of the reservation, other forces were working against them. The population was growing—from the 3,921 resident members in 1941 to 4,850 in 1960 to more than 6,000 by 1970. The increasing number of Blackfeet who had left the reservation often included the most educated.¹¹ The land sales and continued fractionization of allotments through inheritance procedures made land consolidation and utilization increasingly difficult. The trend toward larger farms

¹¹ This out-migration continues, largely because there are few opportunities on the reservation for turning learning into income. Weber tried to find a correlation between schooling and income among his Babb sample and concluded that for making money " . . . in a community with very few jobs other than those demanding physical labor, comparative youth and vigor are more important than variations in schooling" (1969:16).

60 • DEPENDENCY AND READAPTATION: 1884-1970

433 and ranches increased the need for additional capital, but funds were not available
[47] to meet the demand. Periods of declining employment, that is the recession of
[46] 1957-1959, cut into individual earnings from wage labor. No new proven oil
[315] fields had been tapped, and interest in oil exploration decreased. When individual
657 and tribal earnings fell off, the demand for welfare funds increased. The council
people received was yet another drain upon tribal income.

665 Tribal self-government suffered under these pressures. It was difficult to
get a majority of the tribe to support any political or economic measure. The
council, itself split on issues, despaired of tribal unity:

[494] Members of the Blackfeet Tribe are generally very poor. Their income is meager
652 and consists mostly of income from leased trust land, casual labor, and participa-
tion in Tribal programs operated with Tribal income.

It is very difficult to convince these people that Tribal income should be as-
signed for any purpose. Most of our people see only the spectre of having their
income, and consequently Tribal programs and their direct benefits, diverted into
programs designed for only more progressive members of the Tribe. To these
people, it is a matter of personal survival. Any possible reduction in Tribal income
to them automatically means a reduction in personal income.

657 . . . until at least thirty per cent of the adult population of the Tribe becomes
self-supporting and thus able to plan and to think in terms of the future, it appears
that programs requiring popular approval for use of locally supervised Tribal
funds will certainly be limited to those programs which meet the daily emergency
needs of members of the Blackfeet Tribe. (Letter from the Secretary of the Black-
feet Tribal Business Council to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 3,
1960, Blackfeet Tribal Council Documents.)

Consequently, long-range programs were often deferred, per capita payments
were made, and in most cases, the recipients spent the money for immediate needs.

[362] The pessimism reflected above should be tempered, however. Even as he
655 wrote the letter, the tribal secretary and other councilmen were working on plans
313 for improving the housing on the reservation. Following councils, in face of
continuing criticism by many tribal members, invested money in programs to
develop tribal resources and provide more opportunities for employment on the
reservation: one of the first fruits of this effort was the establishment of the
Blackfeet Forest Products Enterprises in 1963. This group was funded by the
tribe in the amount of \$10,000 and given the authority to lease a mill site and
to award a franchise for the erection and operation of a sawmill to a private
operator. The mill was to hire local help and to use logs cut by Blackfeet labor
from the tribal timber holdings. Mill operations have suffered from breakdowns
because of the age of the equipment acquired; several operators have taken the
concession and given it up in the face of difficulties; but the mill continues to
operate, troubles are being ironed out, and the hours of work available to local
men has gradually increased to the point that the sawmill and attendant timber
cutting operations appear to be a small but important prop to the local economy.

654 With a tribal investment of both land and money, and a loan from the
U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Business Council has developed
an industrial park adjacent to the railroad just south of Browning. The council,

The end of the hunting economy made hunting skills obsolete. Migratory seasonal dwelling patterns lost their function. Dependency undermined band and tribal leadership. Warfare and horse raiding were stopped. A man no longer was able to exhibit bravery in the hunt, in war, or on the raid. He no longer could use these means to acquire property with which to display generosity. 1433 178 177

Other cultural characteristics were seen to have been under strong pressure. Indian beliefs, religion, ritual, curing practices, and some aspects of social life had been discouraged or outlawed for many years. The acceptance of hospitalization and modern medicine reduced the importance of Indian curing as a channel to prestige. The conversion of many people to Christianity, and the suppression of religious expression and ritual undermined these beliefs and practices. The religious avenues to status were slowly blocked.

Many people remained committed to the old values but were hard pressed to make economic adaptation and at the same time express the traditional values. Generosity could still be practiced, but even this was made difficult under the new conditions. The practice of generosity often blocked the economic success the Indians were asked to achieve. A good and generous man could not hoard his cattle when his family and friends were in need, yet if he was generous with his stock the herd was depleted and his enterprise failed. The qualities that bolstered prestige among the Indian-oriented militated against gaining prestige among the white-oriented, and vice versa.

There is, to be sure, another side to the coin that must be recognized. Reciprocity was important to the survival of the poor. This tended to support and even generate generous behavior, making it difficult for me to decide whether the present stress on generosity is a carry-over from the old days or a response to modern conditions. Probably both factors are present in the patterns of daily reciprocity; cultural persistence seems evident in the rhetoric of generosity and surely most apparent in the give-away ceremonies. 571 177

The increased hybridization of the population was noted. This contributed to quite divergent home environments and socialization practices among the tribe. 177 [563]

All of these factors resulted in differing economic, social, and cultural accommodations among the tribal members. A few succeeded and many failed in subsistence endeavors. In varying degrees, some people retained Indian beliefs, practices, and values, while others turned to new ways. Still other members of the tribe, mainly mixed-bloods, learned little or nothing of Blackfeet culture but were socialized in white ways.

Some of the results of these processes were described in Chapter 2. In the following chapters I examine the present community in more detail, to show the type of social organization that has evolved in order to accommodate the varied sociocultural combinations that have developed during eighty-six years of change. 128

122 • THE FUTURE

121 violence, automobile accidents, and exposure too often occur. Underlying all this
[165] is the pervasive poverty and lack of economic opportunity that undermines self-
[795] esteem.

Too often, I think, these problems have been described as Indian problems, when they are mostly local expressions of national problems. Such an emphasis has tended to reinforce a negative stereotype of the Indian held by many neighboring whites and even by some of the white-oriented tribal members. The Indian aspect of these problems is that the Indian-oriented tend to be treated as second-class citizens on the reservation, and they, and the white-oriented as well, are treated as second-class citizens off the reservation. This creates resentment for all and identity problems for many of the young people. Some of the resulting frustrations are expressed in ways that create social problems. Beyond this, the causal factors and their antisocial expression are the same as those to be found in every community in the country, and like most other communities, the Blackfeet recognized the problems and are trying to do something about them. A Crisis Clinic, Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Action Programs, the town, the tribe, the B.I.A., church and civic organizations, and concerned citizens are at work. The solutions to these problems may be found elsewhere, they may be found here. Information, support and sympathy are needed: sensational publicity is rightfully resented.

These and other problems should not be glossed over or ignored, but at the same time they should not be stressed to the neglect of more positive aspects. The positive side to the problems described above is that they are recognized by local people and that local people are trying to do something about them. Prophets of gloom and doom are not hard to find, so in these final pages I am going to look more at the strengths than at the weaknesses to show some of the things that I think augur a better future for the Blackfeet.

● 433 The problems of an inadequate economic base and the attendant poverty are all pervasive, but these too have been recognized for a long time and the tribe, bureau, and town of Browning have been cooperating in attempts to create a viable economy. History militates against predictions of success in these endeavors. It is easy to see in retrospect how planners erred when they began so early and persisted so long in promoting small subsistence farming and ranching as the key to Indian economic security, at a time when the trend in these occupations was toward increased use of machinery and the utilization of increasingly larger land holdings. Present plans, too, may prove to be out of step with future trends. These trends, of course, are difficult to identify and action to improve the economy must be taken on the basis of the best predictions and the hope that some of the plans will be in tune with tomorrow.

179 The present plans for reservation economic development are predicated on (1) relocation of some of the population to industrial centers through federal support for on the job training, (2) attracting small industries and their payrolls to the reservation, and (3) increased exploitation of tourism. Success depends not only on how well these are implemented, but on where they lead.

167 Of these ventures, I am least optimistic about the relocation programs.
464 These were not discussed in earlier chapters because my major concern was with events on the reservation and because accurate figures about the results of the past

II

BACKGROUND

The Blackfeet Reservation, with headquarters in Browning, Montana, lies for the most part in Glacier County with a small portion on the south and east extending into Ponderosa County, Montana. Most of the Reservation is on the eastern side of Glacier National Park in northwest Montana adjacent to the province of Alberta, Canada. Miles of green range and farmlands fan out from the base of the Rockies to form the Reservation which covers a tract of land 52 by 38 miles (see Figures 1 and 2).

The Reservation is served by rail and air and both local and national bus lines, as well as several local and transcontinental trucking lines. A network of Federal, State and local highways provides ready access to the important markets of Great Falls, Shelby and Havre, Montana. A full range of utilities is available on the Reservation - telephones, a plentiful water supply, and natural gas from gas fields in nearby Montana and Alberta. Only the larger communities of Browning and Cut Bank have adequate sewer systems. Electricity is supplied by a cooperative electric company from power developed at the Fort Peck Dam in eastern Montana. Approximately 2,000 kilowatt hours of power are available on the western side of the Reservation with considerably more on the eastern side.

The average rainfall measures 14.4 inches per year in the Browning area and 13.8 inches in the lower and eastern parts of the Reservation. Annual snowfall is approximately 63 inches. Mean temperatures range from 19° F. above zero in January to 61° in July. Frost has been reported as late as May 19 and as early as July 16 during the last seventy years. The major part of the Reservation is subject to strong and persistent westerly winds which are usually more severe during the early spring months. Generally the climate on the Reservation is of the semiarid type. The average growing season for irrigated crops is approximately 120 days. While the economy on the Reservation revolves largely around agriculture, significant raw materials are available in and under the land surface. Oil and natural gas are found in the eastern portion of the Reservation's well known Cut Bank oil fields. The Choteau iron deposit extends from the foot of the Rockies over the western half of the Reservation. Its titanium content is approximately 12 percent and the iron content is from 30-40 percent. Coal reserves are estimated at approximately 30,000,000 short tons. Abundant recreational facilities are available for outdoor activities. The many lakes offer boating, swimming and fishing. There is big game and upland bird hunting during certain seasons of the year. The Blackfeet Tribe recognizes the value of this important tribal property with respect to its potential for future development. It represents 1,500,000 acres of gently rolling plain between 3,500 and 4,500 feet above sea level.

The population of the Blackfeet Reservation in 1960 was 4,900. Approximately 50 percent (800) of the adult males on the Reservation have been classified as skilled or semiskilled workers. An almost equal percentage of adult females, 60 percent (300), are likewise categorized. Wage rates for males in manufacturing areas have reached \$2.21 per hour while female employment rates

TABLE 11. BLACKFEET INDIAN GRAZING LAND

	Total acres leased	No. of lessors	Average acreage leased
Indian	400,000	150	2,666
Non-Indian	380,000	73	5,067

311
421
121

TABLE 12. BLACKFEET INDIAN FARM LAND

	Total acres leased	No. of lessors	Average acreage leased
Indian	8,000	40	200
Non-Indian	98,000	175	560

Productive Assets

In 1900, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs included in his Annual Report the material which is presented in Table 13.

TABLE 13. CHARACTERIZATION OF INDIANS IN 1886 AND 1900

	1886	1900
Number of Indians who can read	18	900
Horses and mules owned	1,203	22,004
Cattle owned	Zero	12,000
Acres cultivated	12	300
Bushels of oats, barley and rye harvested	30	700
Bushels of vegetables harvested	100	3,700
Tons of hay cut	170	6,000

115
118
61212
231
241
431

In December 1936, a rather detailed inventory was made by the Blackfeet Tribe of productive assets of the Blackfeet Indians living on the Reservation. This information is presented in Tables 14 and 15. Similar data for Glacier County, Montana, in which the Reservation is largely located, are presented in Tables 16-20.

657
433TABLE 15. BLACKFEET INDIAN "PRODUCTIVE ASSETS" - TIMBER
(December 1936)433
131Timber Stands

Species	Board Feet
Lodgepole pine	29,121,000
Spruce	19,804,000
Douglas fir	6,780,000
Alpine	2,268,000
Net total annual increment	743,000

TABLE 14. BLACKFEET INDIAN "PRODUCTIVE ASSETS" - LIVESTOCK
(December 1956)

Livestock	Number of families owning	Beginning inventory	Number purchased	Number produced	No. died or lost	Used in home		Sold		Closing inventory as of Dec. 1st
						No.	Value	Number	Value	
<u>Beef cattle</u>	425	16,457	906	9,407	935	123	\$13,294	8,340	\$655,746	17,372
Cows	425	9,371	351	0	276	59	7,630	1,262	178,735	10,604
Heifers	348	2,516	393	0	196	2	160	823	72,479	2,660
Steers	15	126	24	0	23	62	5,504	844	74,529	48
Calves	385	4,078	52	9,407	424	0	0	5,386	323,878	3,649
Bulls	236	366	86	0	16	0	0	25	6,123	411
<u>Dairy cattle</u>	33	172	3	111	20	4	230	106	7,298	156
Cows	33	135	3	0	3	0	0	22	2,807	126
Heifers	8	14	0	0	2	0	0	10	775	11
Calves	11	22	0	111	14	4	230	74	3,716	19
Bulls	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Sheep</u>	26	6,047	324	4,901	456	1	16	4,498	69,813	6,314
Ewes	25	5,404	284	0	237	0	0	1,175	18,346	4,699
Lambs	24	520	16	4,901	215	0	0	3,299	51,045	1,480
Wethers	0	1	0	0	0	0	16	8	112	0
Kids	23	122	24	0	4	0	0	15	310	135
<u>Swine</u>	14	145	5	209	30	27	732	214	5,058	88
<u>Horses</u>	418	2,939	52	287	115	0	0	533	18,180	2,630
<u>Chickens</u>	100	3,604	2,026	1,151	760	1,741	2,181	602	1,123	3,708

21

113
113
113

7: United States

N-4

(no date) 1964

NPS Blackfoot NPS

Piegan
Montana

TABLE 16. GLACIER COUNTY, MONTANA, "PRODUCTIVE ASSETS" - CROP YIELDS
Agricultural Statistics, 1959 (Official Figures)

Crop	Acres planted	Acres harvested	Yield per harvested acre (bushels)	Production (bushels)	Value \$
Rye	700	600	26.0	15,600	10,000
Durum wheat	600	600	21.0	58,800	110,000
Other spring wheat	30,700	30,500	19.3	587,500	998,800
Corn	---	---	---	---	---
Oats	2,500	700	28.6	20,000	11,400
Barley	82,100	80,900	30.1	2,431,500	1,653,400
Flaxseed	1,200	1,100	6.5	7,200	19,200
Potatoes	10	10	40	400	1,400
All hay	---	39,400	0.71 tons	28,000 tons	672,000
Alfalfa hay	---	4,000	1.28 tons	5,100 tons	---
Wild hay	---	30,100	0.33 tons	16,100 tons	---
Mustard seed	1,100	1,100	380 lbs	41,800 lbs	16,300

TABLE 17. GLACIER COUNTY, MONTANA, "PRODUCTIVE ASSETS" - LIVESTOCK ON FARMS
AND RANCHES
Agricultural Statistics (Official Figures)

Year	Cattle and calves	Milk cows	Sheep and lambs	Horses and mules	Pigs	Chickens
1958	38,900	300	33,500	2,600	700	6,900
1959	42,100	200	40,000	2,700	1,400	7,000
1960	49,300	200	54,600	2,700	1,100	6,700

TABLE 18. GLACIER COUNTY, MONTANA, "PRODUCTIVE ASSETS" - FARMS BY ECONOMIC
CLASS
(1954 Census of Agriculture)

Class	Value of farm products sold	Number in 1950	Number in 1954
I	\$25,000 or more	27	40
II	\$10,000 - \$24,999	97	99
III	\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999	43	69
IV	\$ 2,500 - \$ 4,999	64	38
V	\$ 1,200 - \$ 2,499	63	43
VI	\$ 250 - \$ 1,199	45	16
Total commercial farms		341	327

7: United States

W-4

(no date) 1964

NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Piegan

Montana

433
435
511

TABLE 19. GLACIER COUNTY, MONTANA, "PRODUCTIVE ASSETS" - CHARACTERIZATION
OF THE FARMS
Agricultural Statistics (Official Figures)

	1950	1954
Total number of farms and ranches	452	364
Number of commercial farms	341	327
Number having no tractor but 2 or more horses or mules	--	64
Number having tractor and horses or mules	--	189
Number having tractor but no horses or mules	--	101
Number having telephone	21	17
Number having electricity	208	266
Number having television	--	4
Number having piped water in home	--	148
Number having home freezer	62	146
Number having grain combines	147	153
Number having operators residing on farm	404	325
Average size of farm (acres)	2,256	3,553
Average value of land and buildings	\$ 27,934	\$ 75,188
Number of farms growing vegetables for home use	104	76
Value of farm products sold	\$3,520,132	\$4,483,270
Value of crops sold	\$1,802,975	\$2,191,634
Value of field crops sold	\$1,802,120	\$2,189,934
Value of livestock sold	\$1,717,136	\$2,291,636
Value of livestock other than dairy or poultry	\$1,590,212	\$2,256,694

243
241

TABLE 20. GLACIER COUNTY, MONTANA, "PRODUCTIVE ASSETS" - USE OF COMMERCIAL
FERTILIZER, 1954
Agricultural Statistics (Official Figures)

Number of farms reporting any use	40
Number of farms reporting use on wheat	28
Number of tons used	329
Number of tons used on wheat	150
Number of acres fertilized	13,924
Number of acres of wheat fertilized	6,546

TABLE 24. FUNDING OF BLACKFEET INDIAN SCHOOLS, 1960-61

Number of meals served indigent Blackfeet Indian children	93,639
Federal funds distributed to schools on the Blackfeet Reservation	\$192,078
Montana reimbursements to schools for lunches	\$ 24,994

871
651

Data upon the total number of Blackfeet Indians living on the Blackfeet Reservation who are attending college are not available. The number, however, is known to be quite small. "Indian Scholarships" from the State of Montana, in a limited number, are available for Indian students attending Montana state-supported schools of higher education. The number of Blackfeet Indian students who are recipients of the above scholarships totals nine.

871
873

The number of Blackfeet Indians who are enrolled in college correspondence courses or otherwise pursuing their post-high school education is also unknown, but it is believed that the number is quite small.

Observations

179
651

The Blackfeet Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Blackfeet Tribal Council have, through the years, developed many programs to assist the agricultural development of the Reservation. Their accomplishments have been great, but much yet remains to be done.

1. The agricultural economic alternatives for the Blackfeet Indian Reservation are a great deal more limited than those existing for certain other areas in the United States. The Reservation, however, does possess certain natural advantages (excellent range land and irrigation water) which give it the potential, presently not fully utilized, of being competitively highly successful in livestock production and in dry-land small grain production. In this connection, Bulletins 522, 542 and 555 of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station are required reading for anyone seriously interested in Blackfeet Indian agriculture.

179
433

651

2. Relatively few Blackfeet Indians are presently interested in dry-land small grain production. It is estimated that 90 percent of the wheat and barley produced on the Reservation is raised by non-Indians.

433
213
563

3. The Blackfeet Indians are very interested in competitive, commercial livestock production.

433
233

4. It is well recognized by individual Blackfeet Indians, the Blackfeet Tribal Council, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Montana State College that, under existing conditions, a herd of 150 cattle is the minimum number to form a competitive economic unit.

5. Securing adequate financing for an economic herd of cattle is a serious, limiting factor in the development of cattle ranching by the Blackfeet Indians.

6. It must be recognized that not all Blackfeet Indians presently possess the managerial capability to handle successfully a herd of 150 or more cattle. 433
233

7. There is virtually no interest in mere "existence-farming" among the Blackfeet Indians. 241

8. The percentage of Indian high school graduates who attend college or who otherwise pursue further education is very low. The attrition rate between primary and secondary school graduates is much too high. The capacity to learn among the Blackfeet Indian youth is identical to that of other segments of the United States population. 871

9. Television provides an excellent means of mass communication for these Blackfeet Indians having television sets. 207

10. Home gardens, both in Browning, Montana, and elsewhere on the Reservation, are virtually nonexistent. 241

11. The timber resources of the Blackfeet Reservation are substantial and could be much further developed. 313
137

12. The three irrigation projects on the Reservation are excellent starts, but the use of irrigation water needs much further development. 312

Recommendations

1. The education of each Blackfeet Indian youth to his full capabilities is a basic must. The education effort is substantial today, but it must be intensified, if the Blackfeet Indians are going to compete successfully in today's society. 121
179

2. Adult education programs, freely utilizing television, hold much promise and should be vigorously expanded. The advantages of home vegetable gardens, and the method of growing vegetables are but one example of such a program.

3. Continued and increased efforts to improve the cattle herd management practices, utilizing all means of communication, need to be made.

4. The potentials in timber and irrigation water on the Reservation should be further developed.

5. Agricultural credit programs with an accompanying mandatory educational and supervisory program should be expanded in order that many, but most probably not all, of the present Blackfeet Indian cattle herds can become a competitive economic unit. Somewhat different credit, educational and supervisory programs need to be developed in order that qualified and interested young Blackfeet Indian adults can obtain the financial backing required to enter the business of cattle ranching. The traditional cattle-repayment program still offers a great deal of opportunity, and considerable thought needs to be given on the part of all concerned as to how it can best be utilized under today's conditions.

[ca. 1850]

4: The Staff of Life

105
177
224
493
IN THE MIDDLE of the nineteenth century Blackfoot life was a remarkable blend of traditional Indian customs modified by white influences. It was a way of life that would have been impossible without the European horse and the white man's trade goods. Nevertheless, Blackfoot economy was still based primarily upon buffalo hunting, as it had been in prehistoric times. Indeed, after American traders began to accept buffalo robes in trade, Blackfoot hunters had a greater incentive for killing buffalo than ever before. Then the buffalo not only furnished the Indians' subsistence but indirectly enabled them to obtain luxuries they never dreamed of before the coming of Napikwan.

136
Fortunately, buffalo were still very plentiful in the Blackfoot country. Governor Isaac I. Stevens, who explored westward up the Missouri Valley in 1853, noted that the "quantity of buffalo" between Fort Union and the Rocky Mountains was "almost unbelievable." In September of that year Lieutenant Mullen found "innumerable herds of buffalo" feeding in the Judith Basin south of the Missouri, while John Mix Stanley saw "numerous herds" of them grazing in the vicinity of the Sweetgrass Hills on Milk River. At that time Alexander Culbertson regarded "the entire country of the Blackfoot" as "perhaps the best Buffalo Country in the N.W."¹

¹ Stevens, "Narrative," *PRR*, 123, 239; Stevens, "Report on Mr. J. M. Stanley's Visit to the Piegan Camp at the Cypress Mountains," in *Pacific Railroad Report of Explorations*, I, 447; Alexander Culbertson to Isaac I. Stevens, ca. 1853, Indian Office Records.

[ca. 1880-1900] TRADING LAND FOR A LIVING

Like many another war veteran, White Quiver had difficulty adjusting to the monotony of peacetime living. Police records show that he was repeatedly arrested and jailed for drunkenness until, in 1897, this very able man was given a sergeant's uniform and enrolled in the Indian Police. 729 [689] [625]

For four long years the hapless Piegans remained huddled together in their little band camps on Badger and Birch creeks on the far southern portion of their huge reservation. Their economic progress was painfully slow, slower in fact than that of any other tribes in Montana. Drought, strong winds, and late spring and early fall frosts discouraged their meager efforts at tilling the soil. In 1886 their agent reported "quite a number of potato patches" cultivated by the Indians. But the total farming effort of more than two thousand Indians amounted to but twelve acres.⁷ Obviously, these former big game hunters derived little satisfaction from grubbing in the dirt. 493 241

While the individual Indians owned no cattle, the agency herd of about five hundred head proved a tempting target for adventurous meat-loving Indians, who found they could kill a cow or steer and get away with both meat and hide before the herder discovered them. Agent Allen reported that "many cattle have been lost in that way."⁸ Occasionally, young Indians killed a steer belonging to a white rancher south of the reservation. They justified their action by saying that the whites had killed a great many of their buffalo. Why shouldn't they kill a few of the white men's cattle? 224 [231]

Meanwhile, white cattlemen cast envious eyes on the great expanse of reservation grassland unused by the Indians. On February 25, 1884, Delegate Maginnis introduced into the House of Representatives a bill which was intended to reduce the area of the reservation and throw the ceded portion open to settlement. But the Commissioner of Indian Affairs objected to the 648

⁷ Journal of Indian Police, 1890-1895, the Blackfeet Archives.

⁸ Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1885, 118.

⁹ Ibid.

[1900-1950]

LEARNING TO WALK ALONE

stock raising and as an incentive to cattle raising among the less ambitious fullbloods, this experiment was a failure, even during the few years that it was a financial success.⁵ 655 233

For a brief period during World War I, when cattle prices were high, the reservation cattlemen prospered. In 1918 the Blackfoot Indians led those of most other western reservations in the purchase of Liberty Bonds. Then disaster struck. Two years of summer drought withered the crops in the fields. No hay could be cut for winter feed. The reservation range became overstocked. When the dry summer of 1919 was followed by one of the severest winters on record, thousands of weak, underfed cattle and horses froze to death. White settlers on lands in northern Montana suffered along with the Indians. Many of them abandoned their homes and sought employment elsewhere. But the Indians had no other place to go. They were wiped out. 233 433

By 1920 most of the Blackfoot Indians had little left but their land. And some of them had lost even that. Two years before, authority had been granted to convert the trust patents of those Indians who were declared competent to fee patents, which would permit landholders to sell or otherwise dispose of their land. These patents were issued to debt-ridden, illiterate Indians, who became easy prey for white land-seekers, who acquired some of the best land on the reservation at a fraction of its value. When Walter W. Liggett investigated the affairs of the Blackfeet Reservation for the Committee on Indian Affairs of the United States Senate a decade later, he reported that "210,000 acres of land formerly owned by the Indians has passed into the possession of white men after the Indians were granted fee patents. . . . There is no doubt at all that scores of these patents were issued illegally to Indians incompetent in fact as well as in the eyes of the law. In nearly every case the issuance of the patent meant that the Indian was defrauded of his land."⁶ 423 425

Liggett learned that these land frauds were but the culmina- 657

⁵ Reports of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1918, 28.

⁶ Survey of Conditions of Indians in the United States, 70 Cong., 2 sess., Senate Resolution No. 79, 12747-48.

THE BLACKFEET

[1900-1950]

642 Their

[641] new constitution declared that all persons of Indian blood whose names appeared on the official census roll of the tribe as of January 1, 1935, as well as all children born of any blood member of the tribe maintaining legal residence on the reservation at the time of such birth, were considered members of the Blackfeet Tribe. A Tribal Council of thirteen members, elected semi-annually by residents of the various districts or communities on the reservation, was empowered to manage tribal property and money, to regulate law and order on the reservation (except for certain major crimes), to supervise the preservation of reservation wildlife, and to encourage Indian arts and crafts, culture, and traditions.

433 In spite of continued national economic depression, the condition of the Blackfoot Indians improved under the new Indian policy. Revolving credit loans enabled Blackfoot stockmen to increase their cattle and sheep holdings nearly fourfold between the years 1933 and 1941. By 1943 the average family income among the Blackfeet had risen to \$1,320. Seventy-five families had agricultural incomes in excess of \$1,500. However, 112 households received direct relief in December of that year. Nearly three-fourths of those families were fullbloods.¹³

702 During World War II, hundreds of young men and women, descendants of generations of Blackfoot Indian warriors, answered their country's call to service in the armed forces. Before they left the reservation, many of those who enlisted or were drafted were feasted by their relatives while aged veterans of the intertribal wars sang their sacred war songs and prayed for the young men's success. Parents of full-blood servicemen were comforted by the age-old Blackfoot saying, "It is better for a man to be killed in battle than to die of old age or sickness." Those who remained at home purchased war bonds, formed an active War Mothers' Club, and performed the sacred sun dance in honor of their loved ones whose lives were in danger overseas. Blackfoot Indians served with distinction beside non-Indian

¹³ Freal H. McBride, Ten-Year Program for the Blackfeet Indian Agency, 1944. (Mimeographed copy in Museum of the Plains Indian.)

THE BLACKFEET

[1900-1950]

434 index fails to point out the number of Indians who had virtually no earned income, or the number of successful Indians whose earnings from livestock operations or wages far exceeded the family average.

433 It is difficult to generalize on the subject of Blackfoot Indian economic progress during the first half of the twentieth century. Certainly the rapid progress toward self-support which their white friends prophesied for these Indians at the turn of the century did not materialize. One of the causes for this failure was surely the lack of any consistent government policy for these people. The vacillating policy of alternately encouraging the Indians to farm, then to raise livestock, was confusing to the Indians who participated in these programs. It was not surprising that many of them lost enthusiasm for government-sponsored programs presented as panaceas for their economic ills.

433 Indians, like other people, vary in individual ability, initiative, and diligence. Some became discouraged as a result of early failures, and lost heart. Others profited from those experiences and tried to work all the harder. So economic success or failure has been more of an individual than a tribal matter. Before the middle of the century, many of the Blackfoot Indians did "learn to walk alone." Many others are no better off economically than were their fathers or grandfathers half a century ago.

563
162 The most remarkable trend in the history of these Indians during the first half of this century has been the rapid growth in the mixed-blood element of the population. As recently as 1910, fullbloods comprised a majority of the tribal membership. In the next two decades the numbers of the mixed-bloods nearly doubled, while the full-blood population decreased by more than 15 per cent. By 1930 the mixed-bloods comprised two-thirds of the Indian population of the reservation and nearly three-quarters of the most vigorous portion of that population—those under forty years of age.¹⁶ By mid-century the mixed-bloods numbered 85 per cent of the tribal membership of nearly six

¹⁶ *The Indian Population of the United States and Alaska, 1930*, U. S. Bureau of Census, 73, 76.

174
131 Kroeber (1939, p. 82) regarded the Blackfoot as "ancient occupants of the northern true plains or rather of the foothills of the Rockies and the plains tributary thereto." However, David Thompson, in 1787, found that the testimony of elderly Piegan (born and raised in the Pedestrian Culture Period) clearly pointed to that tribe's residence on the Saskatchewan Plains, near the Eagle Hills, some 400 miles east of the Rockies, in the early 18th century. It was not until after the Blackfoot tribes obtained both horses and guns that they pushed southwestward to the foothills of the mountains and the area that became their historic homeland (Thompson, 1916, pp. 327-329, 348).

Blackfoot traditions support this interpretation of the southwestward movement of these people in early historic times. This movement is also attested by traditions of the Flathead and Kutenai, whom the Blackfoot drove from the eastern foothills of the Rockies in present Alberta and Montana (Ferris, 1940, pp. 90-92; Thompson, 1916, pp. 304, 327-344, 463; Teit, 1930, pp. 316-321).

Assuming that the Piegan lived near the Eagle Hills and the Blood and North Blackfoot resided at no great distance from them to the northward or eastward in the period immediately preceding their acquisition of horses, it follows that the Blackfoot tribes were on the grassy plains well within the range of the buffalo at that time. This locality was north of the known limits of aboriginal maize cultivation in the Great Plains. Although the Blackfoot probably grew small plots of tobacco, it is improbable that they raised food crops. They were hunters of buffalo and smaller game and collectors of wild plant foods in season.

174
[501]
[481]
[221]
[433] Thompson also found that elderly Piegan had "no tradition that they ever made use of canoes" (Thompson, 1916, p. 348). It appears clear, then, that the pre-horse Blackfoot of the early 18th century were pedestrians. Presumably they walked over the Plains, carrying their possessions by dog transport and on their own backs, in quest of buffalo, in warmer weather and retreated to timbered river valleys or to marginal forested areas in winter. The basic economy of the historic Blackfoot, characterized by dependence upon the buffalo for food, some clothing, and shelter (lodge covers), antedated the Horse Culture Period.

HORSE ACQUISITION AS A STIMULUS TO CULTURAL INNOVATION

231
[182] The horse differed both physically and behaviorly from the dog, which had been the Indian's only domesticated animal and only beast of burden in the Pedestrian Culture period. This fact alone required extensive adjustments in the daily habits of Indians who undertook to acquire, breed, care for, and use horses.

VI. EFFECTS OF THE FUR TRADE UPON THE BLACKFOOT

439
197
198 If we were to characterize in a word the effects of the fur trade on Blackfoot culture that word would be expansion. The key to the understanding of this expansion is the transition from an economy which produced for its own needs to one which produced for an ever-increasing market. Far from breaking down the existing Blackfoot institutions the fur trade acted as a stimulus to their development. The changes wrought in Blackfoot culture are most discernable in their material culture, social organization and warfare. Some of the more important points that will be discussed are the increase in the size of tipis, the enlargement of buffalo corrals, the higher standard of living following the introduction of elements of white material culture, the improved means of subsistence, the increase of wealth, the growth of polygyny, and the development of a commercialism which permeated Blackfoot life.

439
197 When the fur traders first came to the Blackfoot, the Blackfoot were friendly, but aloof and independent. This was due largely to their economic self-sufficiency. Unlike the Cree, and later the Flathead and Kutenai, who saw in the superior technology of the whites a guarantee against the ever present threat of starvation and became specialists in trapping, the Blackfoot scorned to turn to trapping. Blackfoot economy, in contrast to the tribes to the east and west, never became subservient to that of the whites for its subsistence needs.¹⁰⁰ Duncan M'Gillivray, a clerk of the Northwest Company put it very well in a passage written in 1794.

• [433]

"The inhabitants of the Plains are so advantageously situated that they could live very happily independent of our assistance. They are surrounded with innumerable herds of various kinds of animals, whose flesh affords them excellent nourishment and whose skins defend them from the inclemency of the weather, and they have invented so many means for the destruction of animals that they stand in no need of ammunition to provide a sufficiency for their purposes. It is then our luxuries that attract them to the fort and make us so necessary to their happiness."¹⁰¹

439
197
511 With the infiltration of the labor saving devices of white material culture, and the consequent rise in the standard of living, the "luxuries" soon became necessities, and Blackfoot dependence upon the whites, though on a different level than that of the Cree, was no less real. After a time it was

¹⁰⁰ For the contrast with the Plains and Woodland Cree, see Mandelbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

dignity they conferred."¹⁴⁶ This suggests a very different condition from the frequent buying and selling of the 1850's-1880's which is attested to by field material. Culbertson tells us that a bundle was valued at nine horses.¹⁴⁶ This too, is far below the later bundle prices of thirty to sixty horses.

Judging from our more complete information of the reserve period there seems to be a direct relation between the fluidity of bundle transfers and the price of bundles on the one hand, and the number of horses. Thus, with the falling off in the number of horses on the North Piegan reserve following the depression of 1929, the bundle transfers practically came to a standstill and there was a sharp fall in the prices paid for them.

Our material therefore suggests that the greater fluidity in bundle transfers is related to the expansion in Blackfoot economy and the increase in wealth that we have already noted. We have seen that the increase in the size of herds and the growth of polygyny occurred in the eighteen thirties and thereafter. It is significant that the first mention in the literature of medicine bundles and the fact that they were sold for horses also occurs in this period (1833).¹⁴⁷

This raises the question of the age of Blackfoot medicine bundles. When Thompson visited the Piegan in 1878 he made no mention of bundles and specifically observed that medicine bags were absent. It may be assumed that had bundles been present Thompson would have mentioned them because of their resemblance to medicine bags. The following passage from Thompson's journal gives an interesting account of medicine pipes, which were probably the precursors of the medicine pipe bundle.

"The natives of the forest pride themselves on their Medicine bags, which are generally well stocked with a variety of simples which they gather from the woods and banks of the Lakes and Rivers, and with the virtues of which they are somewhat acquainted. The Indians of the Plains had none of these . . . But these people must also have something to which they can attach somewhat of a supernatural character for religious purposes; and for this purpose they have adopted the Red Pipe, and Pipe Stem, which seems to have been such from old times . . . for a medicine pipe there are certain ceremonies to be gone through and a woman is not allowed to touch a medicine pipe . . . and their long pipe stems are equally sacred. These are of three to more than four feet in length, and about three to five inches in girth and well polished. Each respectable man has from three to four of these pipes which are tied together when not in use and hung on a tree; on removing from place to place the owner slings them over his back and at the encampment again hangs them up."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

¹⁴⁶ *Idem.*

¹⁴⁷ *Idem.*

¹⁴⁸ Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-366.

175
425
432
778
[435]

425
432
778
435

[178]
[433]

175
778

175
276
778

[171]

[562]

54 EFFECTS OF WHITE CONTACT UPON BLACKFOOT CULTURE

very important as a medicine object, deriving its power from the symbols painted upon it.¹⁶⁶

The camp circle is recent among the Blackfoot. When Henday visited the Blackfoot in 1754 he came upon 200 tents camped in two parallel lines with an open avenue between them.¹⁶⁷ Jenness suggests that this arrangement was "very satisfactory for repelling slow infantry attacks, but not the sudden raids of mobile horsemen."¹⁶⁸ Undoubtedly the adoption of the camp circle was also related to their attempts to protect their newly acquired horses from raiding parties, for Maximilian tells us that horses were kept in corrals within the camp circle.¹⁶⁹ The origin of the camp circle among the Blackfoot may therefore tentatively be attributed to the changes in warfare consequent to the introduction of the horse on the Plains.¹⁷⁰

More important, warfare had become an integral part of the new Blackfoot economy. To better understand this relationship we must consider briefly the role of the horse in Blackfoot economy.

The importance of horses can be gauged by the extensive native terminology used to describe them. The writer has gathered more than twenty terms describing the types and qualities of horses. Horses were classified according to their functions, as race horses, war horses, travois horses and pack horses; and by their special abilities, as "horses that can go long distances", "horses that can run in deep snow", etc. It is clear that horses were valued for their aid in hunting, in war and in transportation. But, in addition to their utilitarian and productive values, horses became a medium of exchange and the main form of wealth.

The accumulation of wealth, the manipulation of property, spending, buying, and selling, dominated Blackfoot life. Social position depended upon the liberal use of wealth, ostentatious display, and other forms of social investment. Every step in religious and secular ritual involved property payments, and the number of horses that changed hands in the bundle transfers, and the buying into societies was truly remarkable.

The ownership of horses therefore became a major index of social status.

The ownership of horses had still further importance, for horses were

¹⁶⁶ An attempt on the part of the American Fur Co. to introduce polished metal shields was effectively blocked by the medicine men who as Bradley tells us, "would have thus been deprived of an important source of revenue." Bradley, *op. cit.*, Vol. 9, p. 282.

¹⁶⁷ Henday, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

¹⁶⁸ Diamond Jenness, *The Sarsi*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁹ The arrangement of two parallel lines was used in marching, as is described in Stanley's account of 1854. "... in less than one hour the whole encampment was drawn out in two parallel lines on the Plains, forming one of the most picturesque scenes I have ever witnessed." *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1854)*, p. 200.

¹⁷⁰ *Idem*.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A BLACKFOOT TRIBE

21

[1877-1894]

confines of a limited area, asked to follow unrewarding and unfamiliar occupations, and forbidden the one activity that assured them a place in the r society—horse-stealing. That such a radical change was accomplished without resistance was due to one fact: there were no more buffalo on these once blackened plains. Rations offered by a friendly though foreign government alone made life possible. 657
178
[136]

Much of the traditional living was destroyed. But the economic mechanisms developed in the buffalo period survived. Unlike the rebellious Sioux, the acquiescent Blood were permitted to retain their horses. To this starving people these horses remained the symbol of wealth. Exuberant property transfers for ceremonial privilege and prestige continued to dominate their life but, lacking the earlier opportunities for improving status, only those who had horses before 1877 were able to participate in ostentatious displays. The need for loyal supporters diminished. So did the need for an energetic, though poor, son-in-law. The rich preferred to bulwark their position by marrying their children to others equally favored. Social stratifications, incipient in the buffalo days, became more marked in these early years of the reserve period. 657
556
178
[425]
[184]
[557]

1894-1910

The new economy continued to be a desultory affair. By 1896, the population had fallen to 1400.⁸¹ The Blood were farming 304 acres, an increase of only twenty-nine in ten years. The farms were small, but the agent proudly reported that "instead of 35 fields worked mostly by whites in 1886, there were now 84 fields worked mostly by Indians."⁸² Still the old difficulties remained and new ones were added. "The depression and lack of need of Indian labor and commodities, the poor crops in the Northwest Territories made it necessary to continue relief without curtailment, in spite of increasing vigilance."⁸³ 657
433
241
[162]
[464]

The earnings for the year, although greater than they had ever been before and distributed to more individuals, fell far below the needs of the tribe.⁸⁴ 434
463

Mining coal.....	\$390.00	657
Hauling coal.....	725.00	
Freighting.....	1183.69	
Hay sold.....	1400.00	
Working wages.....	2000.00	
Sundries.....	1821.42	

Total

\$7510.11

⁸¹ 1896, Vol. 10, No. 14, p. 367.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 326.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

556 The less successful families aped their wealthier neighbors. They too had
184 give-aways, but these were on a lesser scale. They were initiated to a part of
[852] a bundle; they bought the cheaper society memberships; they too had their
favorites, but these children had to be content with small honorings. They
might receive an otter skin, even a weasel-tail suit, or they might wear
their umbilical cords in little beaded bags as the "real" favorites did. But
these meagre efforts of their parents to "keep up with the Jones's," never
succeeded in gaining recognition for their children. Only when the spending
was great and continual was a child considered a "real" favorite by the
Blood. A Bird Shooter or a Joe Duck-Bill might say, "I was a *minipoka*,
but my father died when I was still young. That is why I haven't many
honorings." At these avowals the Blood would only laugh; they knew
what it took to make a favorite.

787 Shamanism began to lose its hold. Wissler, writing at this time, says of
756 the vision quest, "The majority of young men fail in this ordeal as an un-
178 reasonable fear usually comes down upon them the first night, causing
[152] them to abandon their part."¹²⁵ Whatever may have been the trials of the
ordeal it was not waning courage alone that turned the interest of the young
men from the vision quest and medicine power. There were now more
rewarding ways of earning a living.

Even the older men showed little interest in the quest itself, although
they still sought the benefits of supernatural power. Says Wissler, "Men of
medicine experience seldom resort to these tortures, as dreams of a satis-
factory character are said to come to them in normal sleep,"¹²⁶ and in
[425] another passage, he adds, "At present the majority of men seems content
to secure their charms and other medicines from those who do have dreams
[556] or from the large stock of such available for transfer."¹²⁷ Emphasis on
courage and inspiration disappeared; increasingly wealth was the preferred
road to power.

511 SUMMARY.—In this period of 1894-1910, the bulk of the wealth still
556 rested in the hands of the horse-owners who in the first seventeen years of
657 the reserve succeeded in freezing the only valuable form of property that
433 remained to the Blood after the treaty of 1877. The loan system, the final
182 distribution of cattle, the need for fodder and additional help, as well as
those industries that paid money wages, spread the wealth. With the in-
creased opportunities for making a living, social differences became less
conspicuous, but the dominance of the large horse and cattle owners was
never threatened. As the economy expanded, the rich spent more lavishly,

¹²⁵ Wissler, *Ceremonial Bundles*, p. 104.

¹²⁶ *Idem.*

¹²⁷ *Idem.*

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A BLACKFOOT TRIBE

31

[1894-1910]

and those who shared in the new wealth imitated as successfully as they could the behavior of the wealthy tribesmen. The new herding economy functioned comfortably within the framework of pre-reserve values.

1910-1920

FARMING AND THE NEW MONEY ECONOMY.—After the turn of the century, experiment revealed that the soil and climate of the Blood Reserve were well adapted to the cultivation of red fife, an early maturing wheat, and shortly before 1910, land was thrown open for farming. The cattle herders, led by their head chief, Crop-eared Wolf, objected vociferously to any reduction of their grazing fields,¹²⁹ but the agency, interested primarily in obtaining the largest income possible, was not deterred. The younger men, "the working element" as the report calls them, eagerly backed the new plan and rushed in their applications for land, "as much as a steam plough can break in two years."¹³⁰ This "working element" saw its first big chance to make good since the buffalo days.¹³¹ It was a composite of half-breeds who shared in a small way, if at all, in the property distributions of their Blood relatives, a number of full-bloods whose families could offer them little, and a few ambitious and far-sighted cattle owners, mostly from those very chiefly families that had, at first, fought the program so bitterly. The bulk of the herders, however, were content with their lucrative herds and their share in the income from hay. Their poorer but not too distant relatives preferred helping them to embarking upon a new and untried career.

Previous wealth was no prerequisite to this new farming program. Any one willing to work could get forty acres of land, plowed and ready to plant. "The intention is to continue the breaking until every working Indian on the reserve is supplied with whatever acreage he is capable of cultivating." In 1909, 820 acres were broken for fifteen Indians. The farms ran together in a great strip to facilitate the plowing that was done with a steam plow bought with tribal funds, but the report explicitly states, "each man

¹²⁹ Waines, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

¹³⁰ 1909, Vol. 15, No. 27, p. 169; also Harry D. Biele, interview in 1939 with R. C. Wilson, former agent of the Blood.

¹³¹ *idem*.

¹³² Speaking of agriculture, Hudson (*op. cit.*, p. 31) says of this herding tribe, "Only the poorest individuals who had neither animals nor any other means of subsistence resorted to it." Owen Lattimore (*High Tartary*, p. 245) notes a similar situation. "In the new tendency, it is the young man not established and the man who fails to hold his own as a flock-master, herder, and raider who drifts out of the nomadic life and settles on the land."

¹²⁹ 1910, Vol. 17, No. 27, p. 174.

¹³⁰ 1909, Vol. 15, No. 27, p. 169.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

32

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A BLACKFOOT TRIBE

[1910-1920]

657 owns his own farm and after it is broken for him, works it individually
425 without having any interest in the work or produce of any of the adjoining
243 farms. . . .¹²⁴ Out of the proceeds of the crop each Indian paid back to the
[407] trust fund all advances that had been made him including cost of breaking
land, seed, fencing, granaries.¹²⁵
[452] Returns were immediate and large. Chief Running Antelope, who bought
243 out one of the other Indians¹²⁶ while the crop was growing and thus har-
434 vested eighty acres, had a cash balance of \$1309.42 after paying all debts
and advances. Emile Bull Shield came next with a net balance of \$1203.50.
[425] Tallow took third place with clear profits of \$1200.81.¹²⁷ By the end of the
decade, many a young farmer was better off than the old established cattle
herders.

434 The following table shows the amazing increase in income during this
178 decade of greatest participation:¹²⁸

	1911	1914	1919	1920
Farm products, including hay.	\$29,645	\$24,000	\$99,575	\$110,000
Beef	11,549	14,348	60,000	59,929
Wages	13,432	17,751	35,000	50,000
Miscellaneous	2,124	5,001	39,171	34,403
Total income	\$56,750	\$61,100	\$233,746	\$254,332

464 In 1919, there were 4000 cattle (a substantial decrease from the figures
433 of 1906) and 3600 horses on the reserve; 2800 acres were sown, almost
[231] entirely in wheat, and 10,000 tons of hay were cut.¹²⁹ Due to World War I,
[458] all commodity prices were inflated and the returns from beef and farm
products multiplied four times in as many years. Everyone prospered. Even
the single men without herds or land had no difficulty in finding a job.

465 Sometimes a worker might be given a small share of the crop, sometimes
464 he might receive cash wages, but most frequently the remuneration offered
by former herder or new farmer was not unlike that of the buffalo days.
Says Pointed Plume,

In the years I was building my herd and farming I hired Bob Sharp Cutter to
help me. He was the son of my father's brother, Sharp Cutter. He was much younger

¹²⁴ *Idem*.

¹²⁵ 1910, Vol. 17, p. 174.

[427] ¹²⁶ Once assigned, land could be "sold" or "rented" by one Blood to another.
Leases to whites were made only with the permission of the Agency and the native
Council of Chiefs.

¹²⁷ 1910, Vol. 17, p. 174.

¹²⁸ 1911, Vol. 19, No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 24; 1914, Vol. 23, No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 1; 1919, Vol. 9,
No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 68; 1920, Vol. 8, No. 27, Pt. 2, p. 76.

¹²⁹ 1919, Vol. 9, No. 27, p. 36.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A BLACKFOOT TRIBE
[1910-1920]

33

than I. When he came, he was still single, but he remained with me for several years after his marriage. He lived in the same house with me. He received no regular pay, but he was given board and lodging. Sometimes I made him a gift. In the fall I would take him to the dry goods store and fit him out. After his marriage, I boarded his wife as well. Besides this, he kept \$4.00 out of each \$8.00 I paid for hauling the grain to the elevator. There were about thirty hauls.

465
464

Says Ned Sloane,

Spotted Tail, my father-in-law's brother's son worked for me three summers and winters. He was single and lived in my house. He received no regular wage, but besides his board and lodging, I gave him a horse at the end of each year, a complete riding outfit, some clothes, and a small cash bonus every so often. When he married he left me, but his brother who was still single took his place and worked for me for two years.

Shamanism appealed only to the old who were still willing to purchase medicine with horses and validate it with dreams. The herders continued to build up their position as they had in the past. They bought medicine bundles; they joined societies; they honored their sons and daughters with lavish payments in both horses and goods for ceremonial privileges. The new rich spent their money on seeds, implements, barns, and wagons. Unwilling to accumulate more than the few horses necessary to their daily tasks, these fortunate farmers felt no urge to enhance their prestige by ceremonial purchase. But they did have favorites "the American way." They honored their children with extravagant outfits, a fine saddle horse, a fine saddle. While they spent their money differently from the horse owners, they were just as eager to set their sons and daughters apart from the sons and daughters of the poorer families as were the owners of the large herds.

556
[756]

SUMMARY.—During this decade income spread was greatest and Blood prosperity at its peak. With few exceptions, the new farming program received its strongest support from those individuals who had the smallest stake in their society. Quick rewards soon set them on a par with the successful herders, but lacking a surplus of horses, they did not validate their position in the customary manner. For the first time in the history of the Blood, a money economy, entirely divorced from the traditional horse economy, flourished exuberantly and with success in this competitive society.

433
434
657

1920-1940

FROST AND DEPRESSION.—At the end of this golden decade, two catastrophes befell the Blood. The post-war depression caused a sudden drop in commodity prices. Both farmers and herders suffered. But prior to this, the harsh winters of 1919 and 1920 had created a much more fundamental

433
458
433
731
231
434

● 433 change in the fabric of their tribal life. The excessive cold practically
731 annihilated the cattle herds.¹⁴⁰ At one stroke, the accumulated capital of
231 the herders was wiped out. For the farmers the blow was temporary; they
434 still had their land, and after the difficult years a good income, although a
smaller one, could again be derived from wheat. But a herd could not be
replaced in a day, or in a year. Most of the old breeders gave up in despair.
The wheat farmers bought up the cattle that survived.

Pointed Plume, scion of one of those chiefly families that had been ambitious enough to farm as well as herd, says,

425 Then in 1919 the winter was very severe. The Government feared for the cattle
231 and horses on the range, and the cattle were driven into a cow camp to protect them.
[731] In spite of all our care, most of the cattle starved. I had only two left. But the still
high price for wheat made it possible for me to buy more. Weasel White Buffalo,
[435] my wife's father,¹⁴¹ said to me, "You are very foolish to raise cattle. You may be
wiped out again." But I went ahead. Other Indians who had only a few remaining
[874] cows were glad to sell them to me, and when the Dunbow Industrial School was
discontinued, I bought up their herd for something like \$300. I paid in wheat money
and horses, one horse or \$30 for a cow and a calf. Today I and my two sons have
160 head of cattle.

231 The loss of cattle in the cold winters of 1919 and 1920 meant the loss of
556 all cash income to the herders; but enough horses remained¹⁴² to carry on
the traditional exchange and purchase. Again on relief the erstwhile herders
still achieved prestige in the old way, but with this difference: the horse
was no longer the chief symbol of wealth. The agency was quick to recognize
this. Horse exchanges and payments are not entered in the official
books, but transactions in wheat and cattle are duly recorded. For the first
time in more than a century, the man with horses was not necessarily the
[575] rich man. Yet he continued to buy eagerly, even compulsively, into societies
[424] although he could not always complete the purchase. He might join
the Horn Society, four times, six times, eight times, but in spite of such constant
validation, his position became less secure. He still got "respect" but
"respect" worn thin because it was not bolstered by real wealth. Then, as
now, real wealth was in the hands of those men who had gone into farming
around 1910.

434 Never again did cattle herding approach its former peak or popularity.
657 In 1930, there were only 1300 head of cattle on the reserve, less than one-

¹⁴⁰ According to the 1922 report, Vol. 8, No. 27, p. 50, only 1376 head remained.

¹⁴¹ The father of Pointed Plume's third wife.

¹⁴² The number of horses affected by the cold was considerably less than the number of cattle. A clue to this situation is given by Hudson (*op. cit.*, p. 31). He writes: "The horses would first break the crust of snow with their hoofs and eat the top of the grass. After which the other animals could get at the remaining stalks."

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A BLACKFOOT TRIBE
[1920-1940]

35

fifth the number the Blood had boasted in their herding heyday.¹⁴⁵ The income from beef products, if not impressive, remained stable: since 1922, it has varied only within a few thousand dollars. Wheat, however, the mainstay of Blood economy, fluctuated seriously in the post-war period and again with the depressed markets of the early thirties and the extreme droughts that followed. From 1930 to 1932, the number of acres cultivated decreased 50 per cent; farm income dropped from the substantial level of \$100,000¹⁴⁶ to a miserable \$24,000;¹⁴⁷ and "the seasons of 1934-5-6 were in many ways the most discouraging to Indian farmers."¹⁴⁸ Many of them joined the herders on the relief rolls of the agency.

Not unlike the situation in our own West, land was being concentrated in the hands of the few. In 1939, Jim Belly Fat farmed 600 acres—income, \$9000; Pointed Plume and his son George farmed 300 acres—income, \$3000; another son, Harry farmed 100 acres—income \$980.¹⁴⁷ From the first figure there was still deductible support for a sick brother's family and compensation for a helper, but the last two may be accepted as net.

The situation is beginning to tell and tensions over land are growing. The small acreages cultivated in the first years of the reserve did not vitally affect the general economy. The none too productive farms remained little more than homesteads. Nor did the substantial allotments of wheat lands in 1910 create any land shortage; all requests could be satisfied, and in the years that followed, the on-coming generation could also get land for the asking. Wissler, discussing the distribution of property at death, observes, "The older sons usually take the bulk, but must make some concessions to all concerned."¹⁴⁸ So little was land a problem in the early years of wheat farming that a system of ultimogeniture found acceptance:¹⁴⁹ it was customary to permit the youngest son, if he had helped farm his father's land, to inherit it in entirety, on the assumption that the older children had already been well taken care of. Today such expectancy is frequently unfulfilled.

¹⁴⁵ 1930, Pt. 2, p. 64.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁴⁷ 1932, Pt. 2, p. 42. Total income dropped from \$150,000 to \$62,000.

¹⁴⁸ 1937, p. 23.

¹⁴⁹ He had already "borrowed" 50 acres more to work the following year.

¹⁵⁰ Wissler, *Social Life*, p. 26. Informants stated that in wealthy families mature sons were provided with horses and later with cattle. Yet at the time of the final distribution serious disputes arose between grown siblings over the disposition of the remainder share. If the children were minors, the property usually went to the dead man's brothers who were obviously then expected to look after them.

¹⁵¹ Ultimogeniture, it would seem, can only operate in an agricultural society when there is no scarcity of cultivatable land. As land shortages developed, a number of European countries changed within historic time from a system of ultimo- to primogeniture.

592 partially accounts for this higher percentage of young miscellaneous
161 dependents but we also note that youngsters resulting from illegitimate
128 unions, overcrowding, and divorces are beneficial economically to their
136 hosts. Overall poor economic conditions appear to contribute most to
735 illegitimacies, divorces, overcrowding and the high incidence of ADC
182 payments. These relationships will be more fully discussed toward the
end of this chapter.

Economics

121

Now I turn to economic indicators in order to test hypotheses about household composition and economic resources, to see if household responsiveness to economic resources was as strong in the past as in the present.

122
434

Data concerning the economics of the rural households of 1921 pertained mainly to farming, gardening, ranching and a few agricultural and non-agricultural jobs. Here the two rural districts of 1921, so similar in household compositions, population, and family cycle, differed greatly as to the number of persons farming, acres cultivated, and the number of livestock and other domesticated animals kept. I will present some data by way of comparisons of the two districts, then proceed to analyze each in some detail concerning who farmed, how many acres were under cultivation, the number of livestock kept, the racial composition of farming and ranching family heads and their spouses, and the specific resources available to the families. It will be seen quite readily that Old Agency District was far more productive

128

433

433 agriculturally than the Heart Butte District, and that in general in both districts allottees or spouses of allottees with a racial heritage of one-half or less Blackfeet ancestry were without question the more prosperous farmers and ranchers and that these people held most of the few non-agricultural or salaried agricultural jobs.

474
128 Another and certainly critical topic discussed in this portion of the chapter concerns the economic determinants of the formation of farming and ranching cooperatives consisting of related or unrelated persons who shared land, equipment and labor to farm or ranch or both, and acreages shared in common. These cooperatives will be analyzed statistically in an effort to determine whether people combined their resources to maximize their resources for mutual benefit, or if such co-ops were merely fortuitous. In regard to farming and ranching co-ops, I will explore the formation of multiple-family households, ages of productive farmers and ranchers, and attempt to demonstrate the contribution some economic measures made to the family cycle of the past.

433
463

Economic Comparisons of the Two
Rural Districts

Eighty per cent of the people in the Old Agency District were engaged in farming (mainly) and ranching, and 65 of the total of 82 households were involved in agricultural pursuits. Thus about 80 per cent of all households and persons were so engaged. Only about 40 per cent (34 of 84) and 44 per cent of the 396 persons recorded in the survey of the Heart Butte District households were engaged in farming.

433 The difference in the extent of farming and ranching between the two

433 districts is partially accounted for by better agricultural conditions in Old Agency District; there land is more open, less rocky, and enjoys more frost-free days than in the Heart Butte District.

423
241 Families that farmed in Old Agency District cultivated an average of 23.3 acres, with a range of one to 234. Heart Butte District farms averaged only about five acres, with a range of less than an acre to 50 acres. Of the 98 families in the Heart Butte District only 40
162
592 farmed or ranched, a 41 per cent representation. The 40 families made
592
474 up 34 households; 38 of the families farmed or ranched in cooperation with other families. Only two families farmed or ranched alone. The 38 cooperative farming and ranching families comprised sixteen co-op units, eleven of which were composed of related families in multiple-family households (fathers-married sons, fathers--married daughters, mothers-married sons, mothers-married daughters). One of these formed the only
474
433 ranching unit (co-op or otherwise) recorded in the district. Each of the eleven formed a single cooperative unit. Of all the families involved in the co-ops, 26 were closely related; twelve were not related (see Diagrams IV and V).

127 I use here principally the data recorded in the Old Agency District regarding farming and ranching because there was considerably more
128 agricultural activity in that district. Because of this, I have enough data with which to test postdictive hypotheses about the formation of multiple-family households and agricultural co-ops. The data allow for generalizations about who was farming, the age of the family head or his or her spouse (if any), the number of acres cultivated, animals kept,

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 64]

128 and the degree of Indian blood of each allottee and his or her spouse.
I will, however, briefly compare agricultural pursuits in the Heart
Butte District of 1921 with those I learned about in 1966. This will
follow momentarily.

241 Wheat was the major crop with oats and barley ranked behind it;
231 a few families had alfalfa fields and one family raised timothy. Domest-
icated animals were not plentiful; only a small number of household raising
animals. Livestock consisted most frequently of cattle, second in rank
were sheep, with some cases of milk cows, hogs, geese and chickens re-
corded. The number of cattle ranged from one (milk cow) to 235. Fre-
quent mention is made in the survey of the difficulties encountered in
cattle raising. In one instance an allottee had recently lost 100 head
231 of cattle in a severe winter. Only seven households are recorded as
433 having 24 or more cattle and two households possessed 42 and 34 sheep
respectively. The two instances of sheep-raising are the only ones
recorded.

128 The number of acres cultivated and the co-ops that formed to
121 manage these acres will be analyzed to test the hypothesis that meager
and unstable resources tend to force families to cooperate economically
by (1) joining under a single roof or (2) forming inter-household co-ops
to maximize resources. The stability of economic resources will be
difficult to test for in this analysis of agricultural resources because
(434) this information is meager from both districts. Cash income is ignored
here because in 1921 average family cash income was precious little--
only \$150 per annum, as stated in Campbell's 1921 report.

592 agnatically has persisted to the present. Unit 15 is unusually pros-
474 perous insofar as Blackfeet-owned and controlled ranching units are
233 concerned. Since the death in 1970 of the elder head, the enterprise
continues. It is now operated by the two married sons who remain on
the ranch.

423 How to achieve land consolidation among Blackfeet ranchers has
311 long been a pressing problem. Since allotment the extent of land par-
233 cels has diminished with each passing generation. Unit 15 was estab-
177 lished by a White man married to an allotted full-blood Blackfeet woman.
The man was acquainted with ranching techniques and capitalization. As
421 years passed he and his son leased more and more Blackfeet heirship land
adjacent to their own; they raised sheep initially but soon shifted to
cattle. The cards were stacked in favor of this operation from the
start; tribal members in the same district simply did not possess the
592 technical and financial resources to compete effectively. Here is a
case in which substantial, rather than meager or moderate, resources
bring families together in mutual cooperation over a long period of
time.

433 Old Agency District Economics

It was stated below that only 40 of the families farmed or
ranchd in the Heart Butte District in 1921 while 77 per cent of the
families in the Old Agency District were active agriculturally.

121 My effort here is to use the detailed acreage data to make a test
128 of the hypothesis that meager resources correlate with inter-family and

511 gathered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For example, the Bureau re-
127 ported in 1969 that one-half of the on-reservation tribal members are
434 unemployed, and this figure includes only employables. Median family
127 cash income is reported to be \$1,700 per year, with 4.9 persons forming
511 an average family (BIA 1969). On this basis the reported per capita
income is an appalling \$330, about \$2,300 less than Montana's per
capita income and about \$2,800 less than the national average (SAUS
128 1968). My income figures are about double the Bureau's figures; I be-
434 lieve this is so because the Bureau does not report welfare and leased
511 land income in its per family median income. Yet even my reported \$637
per capita income figure for the rural districts and \$770 for Browning
are distressingly meager. I realize that much if not all of the reser-
vation is likely classified as rural and that the Montana-wide figure
below includes the urban population, but I seriously doubt the rural
Montana income is even remotely as low as the Blackfeet.

127 These conditions are no mere fluke of nature. The Blackfeet held
511 an enormous territory which was rich in natural resources, but most of
this was soon lost after a succession of treaties. Eventually the
tribe was restricted to land deemed least desirable by mining, ranching
and farming lobbies. After the present boundaries were set and allot-
ment undertaken, the per capita land base has narrowed with each suc-
ceeding generation.

433 In 1962 non-Indian gross agricultural sales from products raised
563 on the reservation amounted to \$4,318,717, while Indian ranchers and
farmers on the reservation realized a total gross income of \$2,427,699

523 (Ibid.). This, like the figures given in Chapter III concerning Indian
433 and non-Indian ranching and farming on the reservation, further illus-
trates how very narrow the resource base is for tribal members.

433 The following figures shed additional light on the reservation's
434 economy. In 1970 individual Indian leases brought in \$875,487, or
427 about \$136 per capita. This is an important figure. This income, small
as it is, is vital to the tribal members who receive this form of
revenue because, as we have seen, about twenty per cent of the rural
family income is derived from this source, as is a significant portion
of the Browning family income. Undesirable as the leasing of one's own
land to others might be, tribal members do not wish to lose this income.
Leasing fractionated land parcels is about the only way of realizing
[65] some income from the land. For this and other reasons termination of
federal services is a frightening prospect.

316 I also note that mineral leases play an important role in the
427 reservation economy, particularly in the funding of the tribal govern-
433 ment. In 1969 more than \$350,000 came to the tribe (not individuals)
from this source, and individual mineral leases yielded \$71,000 (Ibid.).

433 But all the resources cited (White-controlled or otherwise)
would not support the on-reservation tribal members in a middle class
style.

128 I now briefly describe the private business end of the reservation
433 economy as a final observation. I do not include in these observations
federal employment, which as we have seen, makes up a critical share of
the Browning family incomes. Nor do I include some incidental sources

433 of tribal revenues such as recreational permits, rights-of-way, etc.
[28]

433 There are 141 commercial and industrial enterprises (including
464 commercial recreation) which rely on Indian resources and manpower. The
estimated capacity of employees is 846; average weekly employment is
423. Average weekly Indian employment is 254, which is only about 60
per cent of the total average weekly employment (Ibid.). Furthermore, a
sum of 254 is extremely low considering the number of employables on the
reservation who are unable to secure employment.

464 Job opportunities are obviously poor, as I have abundantly demon-
121 strated, as has the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Young males of my acquaint-
182 ance in the rural district and in Browning have very modest expecta-
tions. To most of them any full-time employment is an enormous measure
of success. The nature of the work matters little; it is a solid income
that makes the difference, that delineates the hopeless and helpless
from those who find respectability and self-respect. In the light of
the data analyzed in such detail in this and my other Blackfeet studies,
it is no surprise that alcoholism, suicide, delinquency, criminality,
[128] illegitimacies and ennui are commonplace. A final nail in the coffin is
167 the realization that conditions have not improved significantly since
121 1921. I have also been able to demonstrate that only about 40 per cent
[127] of the erstwhile reservation inhabitants leave permanently. These data
were gathered from interviews and a review of high school year-books by
persons who knew the whereabouts of former students. If this figure is
only approximately accurate, and I believe it is reasonably accurate
based on the increase in the on-reservation population, we see definite
prospects for the growth of a very large reservation slum.

133 feet, but the greater portion of the reservation ranges in altitude between 4,500 feet in the western portion to 3,500 feet above sea level in the east.

Flora and Fauna

137 This is predominantly short-grass prairie country. The hills are covered in late spring and summer by highly nutritious native grasses which can be mowed for hay in early fall. The uncut grasses and the stubble become dry by fall, yet they retain their nutrients and provide good grazing throughout the better part of the winter.³⁴

Trees are confined mostly to the immediate foothills of the Rockies where both evergreen and deciduous growth is quite dense, and to the river beds and valleys where cottonwoods predominate.

136 The area and the nearby mountains contain an abundant wild-life population, including birds, fish, and both game animals--e.g., bear, deer, antelope, elk, mountain goat and sheep--and fur-bearers--such as, beaver, mink, badger, muskrat and skunk.

224 Hunting and fishing of game varieties is controlled on public, Federal, and tribal lands by State, Federal, and tribal authorities.

● [433] The Indians are not subject to these regulations, but do not turn to hunting and fishing for other than occasional subsistence needs. Some men trap for furs as either a regular or supplementary source of income,

³⁴ Merrill G. Burlingame, The Montana Frontier (Helena, Montana: State Publishing Company, 1942), (p. 265); The Montana Almanac (1957 ed., Missoula, Montana: Montana State University Press, 1957), p. 74.

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

26

Transportation and Communication

491 The Great Northern Railway's main line to the Pacific coast
[496] transveres the Blackfeet reservation, and a major east-west national
[366] highway, No. 2, parallels the railroad. Both connect Browning, the
major trade center on the reservation, with cities to the east and
west. U.S. Highway No. 89 runs through the reservation and Browning
from north to south, connecting with Canadian highways to Banff and
Calgary to the north and providing rapid access to Great Falls, Montana,
125 miles to the southeast.

508 An airport at Cut Bank, 36 miles east of Browning and just
across the reservation border, provides airline service for the area,
connecting with major airlines at Great Falls. Landing strips are
available on the reservation, at Starr School and Babb, for private
and non-scheduled planes.

207 Telephone, telegraph, radio and television provide ties into
[206] the network of national communication. Television comes in from
Great Falls and from a Canadian station at Lethbridge, Alberta. Radio
stations in both nearby towns and distant cities provide a variety of
programs.

Economy

311 Ranching and farming are the major economic pursuits of the
[433] people of these counties. The northern and western portions contain
[231] excellent natural grazing areas and are extensively used by both
residents and outsiders for grazing of beef cattle, sheep and horses.
[241] The eastern third of Glacier county and the greater portion of Pondera
are subject to lesser amounts of rainfall than the more westerly

311 portions but have more frost free days, and have been utilized to a
[241] greater extent for both dry and irrigation farming. Principal crops
are wheat, barley and hay.

382

433

Oil and natural gas production and refining are important industries, with the principal producing fields lying just to the east of the reservation limits. This proximity to active fields has encouraged exploration throughout the whole region, and oil lease money and bonus payments for leasing rights have provided a fluctuating but important prop to the local economy. There is little manufacturing or lumbering, although a strip along the western foothills, adjoining National forests and Glacier Park, has a lumber potential.

433

The population, with an economic base of beef, wool, grain and hay, also supports businesses, services, schools, churches and

366

657

government. Banking and financing institutions are available in Cut Bank, Browning, Conrad and Valier. The needy aged, blind, disabled, and dependent children are provided for by county public welfare system established by state law and financed by tribal, county, state and federal funds.³⁷

Politics

641

The people of Glacier and Pondera counties are citizens of the United States and of the state of Montana. They participate in national and state politics and in the county, precinct, school district and town governments according to their places of residence. Reservation

³⁷

The Montana Almanac, op. cit., pp. 309-311.

428 requires acquiescence of many owners and the monies received must be
423 credited to the accounts of all heirs. Until more people make wills,
[427] and more frequently pass undivided ownership to fewer people, the land
fragmentation will continue to snowball and the work load of the Agency
increase in proportion.

426 The trust status of the land makes it poor security for mort-
423 gages, so it is difficult for the owner of such land to borrow money
for short or long-term operating expenses and capital improvements.
The inability to secure ready financing, the multiple ownership situa-
tion, and many other factors that will be introduced later, have con-
tributed to the present economic condition of the tribal members.

433 On February 1, 1960, in an area in which the predominant in-
511 dustries are agriculture and stock raising, it was reported that only
[241] 40 tribal members are farm operators, and of this number it is estimated
that perhaps only 10 per cent are farming sufficient acreage to be
considered an economic unit. The farming family's income must be
[233] supplemented by wage work. One hundred and fifty families of tribal
members are listed as ranchers, with an average of 85 head of beef
cattle, or equivalent in sheep. A conservative estimate of the stock
required for an economic unit is 100 head, so many of these people may
also need supplemental income.

It was estimated that another 27 families are self-supporting,
or have received the financing which should make them self-supporting,
in business, other non-agricultural enterprises, or as regularly em-
ployed wage earners.

452 In a credit appraisal of an estimated 1,200 Blackfeet families,
700 families were listed as having poor security potential. Of these,

452 400 were further qualified as poor in character and poor security risks. These latter had neither the experience nor the aptitude, neither the training nor the inclination, to operate a going enterprise or meet the standards of financial responsibility set by the Council for prospective clients of a Revolving Loan Fund.⁴⁹ [434] These figures indicate that approxi- [511] mately 983 families of the tribe are unable to be self-supporting and depend upon casual labor, income from the leasing of lands if they have land, tribal per capita payments and welfare for minimum subsistence.

311 Figures on non-Indians use of reservation land reveal the gap
427 between Indian use and the potential of the region. Seventy-five
433 non-Indian operators lease grazing land for stock enterprises, with an average of 5,067 acres each as compared to an average acreage of 2,666 among the 150 Indian operators. One hundred seventy-five non-Indian farmers cultivate farms that average 560 acres each as compared to an average farm size of 200 acres for the 40 Indian farmers. The non-Indians are operating economic units on land leased from Indian owners. Many more Indian families could be self-supporting on their own land if problems of land ownership, financing, and training are ever solved.

Political and Legal Implications

631 The reservation and tribal organization bring a member into a
642 further regional political alignment, in many respects akin to a municipal political division. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1935 and

⁴⁹ Unpublished documents of the Blackfeet Tribal Council, verified by the Loan Office of the Blackfeet Indian Agency.

[1884-1960]

175 In 1896 a severe winter and a shortage of feed caused a
657 40 per cent loss among the Indian cattle, and the Irrigation Engineer
233 for the Agency recommended extension of the irrigation canals in order
[242] to increase hay production.¹⁰⁵ Indian ranchers, however, had a chance
to recover from this setback. Additional cattle were included in the
annual issues and stock raising continued.

648 An agreement for the sale of the Rocky Mountain portion of the
175 reservation was approved by the United States government in 1896.¹⁰⁶
425 The conditions of the sale assured another ten years of annuities after
the obligations under the 1887 treaty had been met.

657 By 1904 the Agent reported a total of 20,509 head of cattle and
433 12,000 head of horses owned by the Blackfeet, and claimed that only
[233] 10 per cent of Indian subsistence had been dependent upon government
issues for that fiscal year.¹⁰⁷ Thus in the first two decades of
dependency the Blackfeet had tried farming and experienced failure.
They were then encouraged to try stock raising and began to make some
economic adaptation as herdsmen.

177 Their cultural readaptation, up to this time, had been less
[555] successful than the economic development. The increasing settlement of
the lands around the reservation and the efforts of the police had
ended horse raiding, thus eliminating an important avenue to prestige.
[797] Christian missions, particularly from the Roman Catholic church, had

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 1896, p. 187-188.

¹⁰⁶ U.S., Statutes at Large, 1897, XXIX, p. 353.

¹⁰⁷ Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, op. cit.,
1904, pp. 610-611, 600.

[1884-1960]

1905-1920

657 Progress in stock raising continued through 1905 and 1906.
427 The Agent persistently attempted to keep encroaching herds off Indian
[233] pastures, and continued a practice begun in 1904 of issuing leases and
permits to both white and Indian stockmen for grazing privileges on
tribal lands.¹¹²

657 The economic growth was again reversed by a severe winter in
731 1906 and 1907. The losses among the stock were heavy and "impoverished
[233] some of the industrious and worthy members of the tribe."¹¹³ An
[433] investigation into conditions on the reservation was ordered, and the
investigating officer's report sheds some light on the progress of
economic adaptation to that time.

[461] He reported that the mixed bloods--about three-eighths of the
[563] tribe--were able generally to take care of themselves, but
the full bloods as a rule had little knowledge of ranch or
farm work, were unwilling to stay a reasonable length of time
in one place or to work where they could not be in parties,
were very apt to quit on little or no provocation and
regardless of the interests of the employer . . .¹¹⁴

657 A Federal act of March 1907 provided for the allotment in
425 severalty of the Blackfeet reservation. Each tribal member would
receive 200 acres of grazing land and 40 acres of irrigable land, or
320 acres of grazing land only. Surplus lands would be opened for

¹¹² The first such permit recorded was a five-year lease of
2,400 acres to the Conrad Investment Company (Reports of the Commissioner
of Indian Affairs, op. cit., 1904, p. 77). An increasing number of
leases are reported for most of the following years.

¹¹³ Ibid., 1907, pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

[1884-1960]

657 public settlement. An appropriation was included for the construction
[425] of an irrigation system for the lands to be allotted.¹¹⁵ Allotment
[653] surveys and work on the irrigation projects were begun in the two years
[464] following the enactment of the legislation.¹¹⁶ Irrigation construction
provided an additional source of labor and income for many Indians.

657 The last annuities under the agreement of 1896 were paid in
433 1908. Henceforth Indian rations and aid were dependent upon tribal
income, reimbursable government appropriations, and occasional relief
measures. The unanalyzed statistics from the Agents' reports for the
next few years give a picture of continuing economic progress for the
tribe as a whole.

[464] The first World War relieved some of the pressure on reservation
[722] resources--good weather and abundant crops prevailed generally until
1917; livestock and produce found a ready market at high prices; and
many Blackfeet were drawn into the armed forces, thereby reducing the
local labor force. But all of this does not reflect accurately the
condition of individuals. A process was going on that was slowly
segmenting the population.

162 First, the population was growing--from 2,063 in 1905¹¹⁷ to
563 2,957 in 1920--and becoming increasingly hybridized. Of the total, in
1920, less than half, or 1,141 persons, were full-bloods, while the
balance were mixed. Among the mixed-blood population 956 were one-half

¹¹⁵ U.S. Statutes at Large, 1907, XXXIV, p. 1035.

¹¹⁶ Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *op. cit.*, 1908,
p. 61; 1909, pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁷ Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, *op. cit.*,
1905, facing p. 16.

[1884-1960]

657 A drought cycle began in 1917 and continued for four years.¹²³

433 The end of the war, in 1919, resulted in the loss of markets. The
[731] drought and falling prices brought bankruptcy to both cattlemen and
[458] farmers in this part of Montana by 1919 and 1920. Veterans returned to
[464] swell the labor force. The Blackfeet shared in this change. The white
homesteaders and cattlemen could abandon their places and go elsewhere;
the Indian could not and had to rely again upon the government.¹²⁴ The
Indian, however, did have the Agency to turn to, an advantage not shared
by the white man. During the winter of 1920-1921 rations were issued to
"over 2,000, or about two-thirds of the entire population."¹²⁵ Several
informants reported that their families and friends were ruined at this
[461] time. A few were able to make a comeback, but many abandoned their
ranches and did not try again.

657 In 1919, a second allotment of reservation lands was authorized
425 in the annual appropriation bill for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.¹²⁶
After this no further allotments in severalty were made to the Blackfeet
Indians.

433 The Blackfeet generally were again dependent. Thirty-five years
461 of attempted economic readaptation were behind them. They had tried
[233] farming and found it unrewarding. They had found satisfaction in stock
raising, but only a few were able to succeed at this in the face of cold

¹²³Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, op. cit.,
1921, p. 55; Daniel W. Whetstone, Frontier Editor (New York: Hastings
House Publishers, Inc., 1956), pp. 145-146.

¹²⁴Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, op. cit.,
1921, p. 56.

¹²⁵Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, op. cit., 1922,
p. 12

¹²⁶U.S., Statutes at Large, 1919, XLJ, pp. 16-17.

[1884-1960]

433 winters, periods of drought, and the fluctuating markets regulated by
[461] national and international conditions. Large numbers of younger men
[233] had been employed in seasonal labor, railway and irrigation construction
[464] work, harvesting and ranch labor and had served in the armed forces.
[427] These jobs provided some cash income but no training for long-range
adaptation. Unused allotments were leased to others to provide another
small cash return to the Indian owner. Many people depended entirely
upon the rations issued and the cash that could be earned by wage work
or leasing of land.

179 Periodic crop failures and price fluctuations made it difficult
461 for the Indian to understand or to develop faith in long-range plans.
Each government program offered future rewards and security, but the
promised rewards never materialized; the only tangible things were cash,
rations and relief. The white man's values of thrift and hard work had
been developed and maintained by a better than average experience of
success; few Blackfeet, by 1920, had experienced enough consistent
reward to become imbued with these values. Every ten years or so their
best efforts had resulted in failure.

1920-1935

433 The next fifteen years were in many ways a repetition of the
past, and reinforced more than they changed the expectation patterns.
[458] Montana farmers, generally, experienced a severe depression during this
[731] time¹²⁷ and this was capped by the national depression and the droughts
of the Dust Bowl years that began in 1929 and 1930.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The Montana Almanac, op. cit., p. 122.

¹²⁸ Ross K. Toole, Montana: An Uncommon Land (Norman, Oklahoma:
University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), p. 240.

[1884-1960]

648 and to adopt a constitution, and those who organized were given broad
657 powers of self-government.¹³⁶ Organized tribes were also empowered to
incorporate and manage tribal properties and income. Actions of both
the political and business organizations were subject to approval and
review by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In addition, the traditional cultures were given recognition
[177] for the first time. A circular sent to all Agencies in 1934 illustrates
the sharp reversal from previous communications about Indian cultural
practices:

No interference with Indian religious life or expression
will hereafter be tolerated And it is desirable
that Indians be bilingual The Indian arts are to
be prized, nourished, and honored.¹³⁷

The Indians were to have a choice as to course of their development.

The Period of Self-Government, 1935-1960

642 The Blackfeet Constitution and the Blackfeet Corporate Charter
473 were accepted and approved in 1935. The population continued to grow:
162 the report for 1935 lists the membership of the Blackfeet Tribe as
161 3,962 of which 561 were living outside the reservation jurisdiction.¹³⁸
● 433 The economy improved slowly after the bad years of the early thirties.
233 The stockmen, in particular, were aided by a provision for a repayment
[426] cattle pool authorized in 1934.¹³⁹ A man could build a herd by
borrowing cattle from the pool and repay in kind from the increase.

¹³⁶ Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, *op. cit.*,
1941, p. 419.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1934, p. 90. ¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1935, p. 163.

¹³⁹ See *Ibid.*, 1937, pp. 212-213 for repayment in kind program,
and *Ibid.*, 1944, p. 241 for a review of the program.

[1884-1960]

648 The Johnson-O'Malley Act¹⁴⁰ passed in 1934 and amended in
657 1936¹⁴¹ authorized the Secretary of the Interior to contract with a
state or other political units, and with schools, colleges, and private
corporations for educational and medical services, agricultural
[871] assistance, social welfare and relief for Indians. The Annual Report
for 1934 stated that the Browning schools were assuming the task of
educating the Blackfeet children from that district.¹⁴²

177 The majority of the Blackfeet still were attempting to make
readaptation to the immediate present, to find success in a new
economic endeavor. They were pressed to close a wide cultural gap in
a short period of time, and to make things more difficult, the national
● 433 economy would not stand still. Ranching and farming were changing in
178 both production and marketing practices. One summary statement in
1957 recognized the course of this change.

The trend toward larger farm and ranch units in Montana has
existed since 1920. Original acreages under the homestead
laws proved too small for profitable farming and gradually
the more successful operators acquired additional land. The
advent of power machinery about 1925 greatly accelerated
this trend.¹⁴³

The Indian's future on small subsistence farms of 80 acres, or
on a ranch using a 360 to 420 acre grazing allotment, was not promising.

[427] A successful operation required the use of leased land and adequate
[426] capital. The heirship status of individual trust lands made leasing

¹⁴⁰ U.S., Statutes at Large, 1934, XLVIII, p. 596.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 1936, XLIX, p. 1498.

¹⁴² Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit.,
1934, p. 85.

¹⁴³ The Montana Almanac, op. cit., p. 202.

[1884-1960]

● 433 difficult, and trust restrictions inhibited the mortgaging of such lands.

178 The day of slowly building a ranch or farm from a cow, some seed and

[426] hard work was disappearing. Few Blackfeet were established sufficiently

[427] in the 1930's to build and maintain a remunerative enterprise.

735 From 1936 through 1940 general drought conditions continued in
[731] the region.¹⁴⁴ A few men held onto their farms and ranches, but most

[434] were forced to rely on wages from occasional labor and welfare payments.

One report stated that general poverty was the lot of three-fourths of
the Blackfeet people in 1936.¹⁴⁵

745 An additional source of unearned income was provided when the

434 Indians were declared eligible for Social Security benefits by an act

657 of 1936.¹⁴⁶ This provided categorical aid to the needy blind, aged,
and the dependent children. In 1939, 91 old persons, 186 children, and
3 blind persons on the Blackfeet reservation received this help.¹⁴⁷

758 From about 1936 on, the impact of modern medicine began to be

178 felt by the Blackfeet. The Agency Physician reported an increased

desire for obstetric service, "an increase from an average of ten a
year to 127 in the fiscal year for 1936."¹⁴⁸ A new hospital was opened

¹⁴⁴ U.S., Office of Indian Affairs, Indians at Work, Vol. IV, No. 7, 1936, p. 37; ibid., No. 8, pp. 37-39; Toole, op. cit., p. 240 (for Montana from 1929 and the following ten years).

¹⁴⁵ Indians at Work, op. cit., Vol. IV, No. 4, 1936, p. 38.

¹⁴⁶ U.S., Statutes at Large, 1936, XLIX, p. 620.

¹⁴⁷ U.S., Office of Indian Affairs, Statistical Report of Public Assistance to Indians under the Social Security Act as of October 1, 1939, p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Indians at Work, op. cit., Vol. IV, No. 4, 1936, p. 39.

[1884-1960]

758 in 1937¹⁴⁹ and during the fiscal year 1940 a staff of twelve served
178 1,181 patients in addition to providing dispensary treatment to
5,204 cases. Five field employees administered to an additional
4,943.¹⁵⁰ C.C.C. nurses and Red Cross workers were also tending to
the health of the Blackfeet.¹⁵¹ The medicine men were losing their
hold. By 1959 informants reported that all the Indians used the Public
Health Service hospital and medicines. Only a few medicine men were
left and while they did some curing, they too went to the white doctors
on occasion.

657 The Tribal Council attempted to further self-help improvement
[643] projects using the revolving loan funds appropriated by Congress. The
[426] Office of Indian Affairs encouraged other enterprises by providing farm
[242] and home extension workers to advise the farmers and ranchers, and to
[232] organize women's community clubs for instruction in homemaking. The
[575] extension agents encouraged the growth of 4-H clubs to teach agriculture,
stock raising and homemaking to the boys and girls.¹⁵²

433 By 1941, the eve of World War II, the Blackfeet had made but
[427] slow recovery. The long-range economic problems had not been met. They,

¹⁴⁹ Reported under construction in Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit., 1936, p. 175; and ibid., 1937, p. 234, reports all hospitals under construction in 1936 were completed in 1937.

¹⁵⁰ U.S., Office of Indian Affairs, Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1940, p. 82.

¹⁵¹ Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit., 1937, p. 218.

¹⁵² See reports in Indians at Work, op. cit., Vol. III, No. 12, 1936, p. 43; and in the Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, op. cit., 1936, pp. 179-184, and ibid., 1937, pp. 211-217.

[1884-1960]

● 433 like other Indians, were still leasing the land to others rather than
[427] using it themselves.¹⁵³ The C.C.C. remained an important economic prop.

[653] The war years, 1942 to 1945, had far-reaching effects on the
722 Blackfeet. The C.C.C. program was suspended in 1942,¹⁵⁴ but several
[653] hundred young men and women served in the armed forces and worked in
[464] defense plants around the country.¹⁵⁵ Ready markets and higher prices
[433] for farm products coincided with increased rainfall to bring general
prosperity to the Montana farmers and ranchers,¹⁵⁶ and the Blackfeet
[167] shared in this. The "greatest exodus of Indians from reservations that
has ever taken place" also occurred during the war years.¹⁵⁷ Indians
were meeting other Americans, learning new skills, and seeing more of
the outside world.

727 Like all past periods of activity and increased economic
[167] advance, this one met reversals after the war. The greater number of
the Indians returned to the reservation when the military forces were
[433] demobilized and the war industries were closed.¹⁵⁸ Wage work fell off
and a "downward trend in family incomes set in."¹⁵⁹

434 The young people returned with money to spend, but the
127 opportunities for investment were scarce. Few of them owned land with
which to start a ranch or farm. They had the money to build new homes,

¹⁵³ Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit.,
1941, pp. 451-452.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 1943, p. 317. ¹⁵⁵ Ewers, 1958, op. cit., p. 324.

¹⁵⁶ Tools, op. cit., p. 241.

¹⁵⁷ Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit.,
1944, p. 237.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 1946, p. 353. ¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 351.

[1884-1960]

434 but again no land of their own upon which to build. Not many had the
727 experience and motivation to overcome these handicaps.

425 While the Indians were readjusting to peace-time reservation
727 life, the general U.S. population was expanding, both in numbers and
in movement of population. The demands for new land revived pressures
for the removal of trust restrictions on Indian land.¹⁶⁰ Once again
there was an increase of fee patent awards and the sale and alienation
of more land.

657 The Council and the Agency persevered in endeavors to resolve
643 the reservation economic problems. Stock raising and agricultural
179 programs were initiated, and national programs for relocation and
233 on-the-job training for Indians were pushed. By 1949 the cattle
727 holdings of the Blackfeet had increased to 14,678,¹⁶¹ but as usual the
figures do not tell the whole story. As in the past, only a few were
able to keep a ranch going over time to remain as one of the 150 families
engaged in stock raising in 1959. Accounts of informants' experiences
during this period show some of the personal and tribal problems of
adaptation during the post-war years.

727 I started years ago to build a herd with repayment cattle. At
233 that time they accepted repayment as a man was able to make it.
426 I took ten years to pay back 50 head. Then they made changes
433 and required that repayment be made within two years. One bad
year made this impossible. 1947 was a bad year. The people
needed hay to get their cattle through the winter. The
government wouldn't finance feeding. Then, because the Indian
wasn't able to feed, they came in and hauled away the cattle.
I managed to borrow \$700 from a friend in town and made it
through the winter.

--a presently successful rancher, mixed-blood, leasing
2,400 acres.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 1951, pp. 368-369.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 1950, p. 356.

[1884-1960]

433
233
727
464
426

My father had a ranch and I helped him from the time I left school until the war. After the war I got a job in California and stayed there until my father asked me to come back and help with the ranch. I worked on the ranch for two years, then my father, who was getting old, sold off his stock in 1948 and I went to work for another rancher.

--a steadily employed farmhand, Case No. 46, $\frac{1}{2}$ Blackfeet.

I had a good herd and then got sick and couldn't take care of them. Nobody would. Some were stolen so I sold them all.

--a full-blood pensioner.

My father bought this land and is leasing more to farm. I dropped out of school to help and now I'm running the farm. My father got a F.H.A. loan to improve the house and we're doing good.

--a young farmer, Case No. 31, $\frac{5}{16}$ Blackfeet.

I was farming, had 80 acres of grain but that wasn't enough to make a living. Then I ranched on 580 acres. I had 65 head, including calves--loan cattle. The loan requirements insist that you stay with the cattle, but I took wage jobs to make enough to live on, so they took my cattle. Just didn't have enough land for farming or ranching.

--a seasonally employed construction worker, Case No. 6, $\frac{1}{16}$ Blackfeet.

[427] I have about 35 head I'm running with family stock on other people's land. These are loan cattle. I've been taking 5 to 10 head a year and haven't been pressed for payment. Just pay them back when I can. The family helps take care of them. I want to lease some land but find it hard to do. The Indian gets priority but somehow it seems hard to get land away from the white leaseholders.

--a regularly employed carpenter, Case No. 45, $\frac{1}{4}$ Blackfeet.

I was raised on a ranch. Before the war I was living and working for my uncle who had cattle. I had some loan cattle and was just getting started. Then I was called into the Army. They only kept me six months, but no one would take care of my cattle while I was gone so I turned back the loan cattle and sold the rest. After the war I came to town and worked for wages.

--an irregularly employed laborer, Case No. 10, full-blood.

433
592

This is the way these men see the problems, and whether or not they are correct in their appraisal is beside the point. The important thing is that, for various reasons, many men failed to make a go of ranching and farming while a few others did. The successful ones appear

81
[1884-1960]

- 433 to have had family support. Only by cooperation, in which some of the
592 family took wage earning jobs while others tended the ranch, were most enterprises kept going.

648 The pressure for ending trust status of Indian land culminated
657 in the adoption of a Congressional Resolution in 1953 calling for the
423 "earliest possible" termination of Federal responsibilities over
425 specified Indian tribes.¹⁶² The Blackfeet were not included among the
Indians to be "freed," but the resolution was interpreted as a state-
ment of intent to end rapidly the trust status of all Indians. In
response to this resolution, the

issuance of patents in fee nearly doubled as compared with
the previous year . . . while the disposition of allotted¹⁶³
holdings through advertised sales more than tripled. . . .¹⁶³

A brief moratorium in 1958 was lifted the following year "in compliance
with a congressional request. . . ."¹⁶⁴ The Blackfeet continued to lose
reservation land to non-members.

- 433 While Federal and tribal authorities were attempting to increase
the industrial capacity of the reservation, other forces were working
[161] against them. The population was growing--from the 3,921 resident
[162] members in 1941 to 4,850 in 1960. The increasing number of Blackfeet
[167] who had left the reservation often included the most highly educated.
[425] The land sales and continued fractionization of allotments through
inheritance procedures made land consolidation and utilization
[434] increasingly difficult. The trend toward larger farms and ranches

¹⁶² U.S., Congressional Record, 83rd. Cong., 1st Session, 1953,
XCIX, Part 8, p. 9968.

¹⁶³ Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit.,
1953, p. 24.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 1959, p. 253.

[1884-1960]

433 increased the need for additional capital, but funds were not available
[434] to meet the demand. Periods of declining employment, i.e., the
[464] recession of 1957-59, cut into individual earnings from wage labor. No
[458] proven oil fields had been tapped and interest in oil exploration
[315] decreased. When individual and tribal earnings fell off, the demand on
[657] welfare funds increased. The Council contributed the greatest share to
the county welfare program, so the relief the people received was yet
another drain upon tribal income.

643 Tribal self-government suffered under these pressures. It was
184 difficult to get a majority of the tribe to support any political or
economic measure. The Council, itself split on issues, despaired of
tribal unity:

643
652
434
184
Members of the Blackfeet Tribe are generally very poor. Their
income is meager and consists mostly of income from leased
trust land, casual labor, and participation in Tribal programs
operated with Tribal income. It is very difficult to convince
these people that Tribal income should be assigned for any
purpose. Most of our people see only the spectre of having
their income, and consequently Tribal programs and their direct
benefits, diverted into programs designed for only more
progressive members of the Tribe. To these people, it is a
matter of personal survival. Any possible reduction in Tribal
income to them automatically means a reduction in personal
income.

...until at least thirty per cent of the adult population
of the Tribe becomes self-supporting and thus able to plan and
to think in terms of the future, it appears that programs
requiring popular approval for use of locally supervised Tribal
funds will certainly be limited to those programs which meet
the daily emergency needs of members of the Blackfeet Tribe.¹⁶⁵

[127] ¹⁶⁵ Letter from the Secretary of the Blackfeet Tribal Business
Council to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 3, 1960,
unpublished documents of the Blackfeet Tribal Council.

652 Consequently few of the long-range programs were started, per capita payments were made, and in most cases, the money was spent for immediate needs.

Summary

433 The emphasis, in this chapter, has been upon the economic
177 problems of Blackfeet readaptation following the depletion of the buffalo. The pressures put upon the people, both directly and indirectly, to change other parts of their culture can be summarized now and related to the problem of the maintenance or replacement of the traditional value and prestige systems.

The end of the hunting economy made hunting skills obsolete. Migratory seasonal dwelling patterns lost their function. Dependency undermined band and tribal leadership. Warfare and horse raiding were [556] stopped. A man no longer was able to exhibit bravery in the hunt, in war, or on the raid. He no longer could use these means to acquire property with which to display generosity.

Other cultural characteristics were seen to have been under strong pressure. Indian beliefs, religion, ritual, curing practices and some aspects of social life had been discouraged or outlawed for [554] many years. The acceptance of hospitalization and modern medicine closed Indian curing as a channel to prestige. The conversion of many people to Christianity, and the suppression of religious expression [554] and ritual, undermined these beliefs and practices. The religious avenues to status were slowly blocked.

Many people remained committed to the old values but were hard pressed to make economic adaptation and at the same time express the

[1884-1960]

433 values. Generosity could still be practiced, but even this was made
177 difficult under the new conditions. The practice of generosity often
blocked the economic success the Indians were asked to achieve. A
good and generous man could not board his cattle when his family and
friends were in need, yet if he was generous with his stock the herd
was depleted and his enterprise failed.

The increased hybridization of the population was noted. This
contributed to quite divergent home environments and socialization
practices among the tribe.

177 All of these factors resulted in differing economic, social
184 and cultural adaptations, or differential acculturation among the
tribal members. A few succeeded and many failed in subsistence
endeavors. In varying degrees, some people retained Indian beliefs,
[563] practices and values, while others turned to new ways. Still other
members of the tribe, largely mixed-bloods, learned little or nothing
of Blackfeet culture but were socialized in white ways.

128 Some of the results of these processes were described in
Chapter III. In the following chapters the present community is
examined in more detail, to show the type of social organization that
has evolved in order to accommodate the varied sociocultural combinations
that have developed during seventy-five years of change.

184 An informant returned to take up residence on the reservation after
177 being away for several years. But the pressures for generosity and
183 the compulsion to follow the rules made him think he had better leave
571 again. "This town breaks you. Too many friends that want money and
[626] rides here and there."

184 Candidates for Council offices often make gifts of a dollar.
183 or two to prospective voters as evidence of their generosity, an act
177 that is criticized if the man has not been helpful in the past. "At
431 election time they're always willing to lend you a dollar, but after
666 they're in they won't give you a nickel." Past generosity, however,
can pay off. "They told me not to vote for him, that he wouldn't do
a good job. I think that's right, but I voted for him anyway because
he always helps people that need it."

184 Generosity can block successful economic adaptation. Evers
183 wrote that sharing and generosity survived in the 1940's and that the
177 "drain of the 'have-nots' upon the 'haves' has the effect of limiting
571 the economic progress of ambitious individuals" and possibly was
433 inhibiting the desire of fullbloods of extensive family connections to
425 achieve material success.¹⁸⁶ In 1959 and 1960 three cases were known,
and others reported, where land was sold for large sums of money.
Relatives and friends moved in with the recipients and spent several
days celebrating the sale. Some stayed to live with the now "rich"
friend or relative. This is reported to be a common practice that has
caused the rapid depletion of such income and returned numerous, now
landless, Indians to poverty and the welfare rolls.

¹⁸⁶ Evers, 1955, op. cit., pp. 321-322.

175 They occupied it as far back as their history is known, and they
657 naturally feel that they have a stronger claim to it than any of
648 the other Indians." As brought out in the earlier sections of this
131 report, the Piegan were not aboriginal occupants of this area (Ryves
Area 965). Like the Gros Ventre they entered it after the smallpox
epidemic of 1781. They did not occupy the region north of the
Missouri as far as the mouth of Milk River. That was Gros Ventre
territory.

175 The reduction of the lands of the South Piegan and their
657 establishment on the Blackfoot Reservation in Montana was approved
648 and became law by Act of Congress May 1, 1888. The reservation is
Ryves Area 695.

175 Some of the land ceded by the South Piegan under this Agree-
657 ment was occupied by them at the time. At the time of the cession the
361 Blackfoot owned some 30 head of cattle. They were living within a
[231] limited area on the southwestern part of their reservation within a
radius of less than 15 miles of their Agency, where they received
[433] weekly rations from the Government. The Agents' Annual Report in
the summer of 1888 stated that they then cultivated 340 acres of
land, and estimated that 83% of their subsistence was obtained from
Government rations, 12% from labor in civilized pursuits and 5% from
hunting, fishing, root gathering etc. (Annual Report Com. Indian
Affairs, 1888, p. 419, 436).

[p. 156]

657 terms of the Agreement. They had traded land for an opportunity
361 to make a living. In 1890 some 1,000 heifers and 25 bulls were
[648] issued to these Indians and additional issues of cattle were made
[231] in subsequent years. In 1893 Agent George Steel stated: "The
[425] Indians are now well scattered out over the reservation on ranches
which they have selected, instead of being bunched up in bands as
formerly." (Annual Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1893,
p. 172). By scattered, he of course meant scattered along the river
valleys, where, like their ancestors of buffalo days, the Indians'
homes were sheltered from the elements in winter, and ready access
to firewood and drinking water.

● 433 The South Piegan were prospering under the new Agreement.
657 By 1896 there were more than 500 different cattle brands on the
368 reservation stock book. (Annual Report of the Commissioner of
[231] Indian Affairs, 1896, p. 176). The building of the Great Northern
[175] Railway across the reservation in the early '90s, the opening of
the new boarding school on Willow Creek in 1892 and the movement of
the Blackfoot Agency to present Browning, north of the railroad in
March 1895, further encouraged the development of the northern portion
[361] of the reservation. This movement of settlement was from north to
south on the plains, not westward into the mountainous area of the
reservation.

000

In his annual Report for the year 1893 Agent George Steel,

[p. 160]

241 generosity was galling. When visitors from the North Piegan re-
177 serve, where gardening had taken hold, came visiting with presents
491 for their poor Blackfoot relations, the latter could give nothing in
return. As additional inducement the farm instructors gave out
241 various labour-saving devices: a plough was substituted for the
177 spades; later oxen replaced the backs of men and the Indian ponies
467 for pulling the plough. Mowers could cut oats faster and more easily
492 than a scythe. A harvester separated seed from chaff more quickly
622 than the feet of men and women, faster even than the horses that
Eagle Ribs turned into the corral to tramp the grain. Every chief
knew that if he did not care for the needs of his followers as other
chiefs did for theirs, his followers would move away. Such failure
brought ignominy.

241 One by one the chiefs changed their minds, as the benefits of
gardening became more evident. In the ten years following settling
on the reserve in 1882, the area under cultivation increased from
169 acres to 311.¹ During these years each band was induced to
plant an area of oats and another of potatoes. Some rounded out
the crop with seeding of various roots. It was humiliating, arduous
labour, little to the people's liking, but seeing tangible rewards for
• [493] their efforts, they went ahead with it. The produce fluctuated from
year to year, but several thousand bushels of potatoes were har-
vested every year varying from 2,370 in 1883 to 14,838 in 1890.

177 This new economy on the reserve could not develop without
introducing many changes in the social structure. In the first place
there was a conflict between Indian ways and white ways. We have
noted this conflict in its relationship to gardening, where following
648 the Indian way served as a slogan to rally the disaffected. Its rami-
622 fications entered also the realm of political control where trouble
177 arose from the very start.

On treaty-signing day in September, 1877, after fifteen or twenty
Northern Blackfoot chiefs had signed Treaty No. 7, Crowfoot called
forth about eight of them to receive the silver medals from the
government. The necessity of choosing the "top eight" from the
continuum of chiefs would be awkward for any Blackfoot. There
might be universal agreement on such figures as Crowfoot, Old Sun,
and Running Rabbit, but at the lower levels, where status could

[127] ¹Unless otherwise specified, all statistics on reserve population, production,
earnings, property, and school attendance are taken from the annual reports of
the Department of Indian Affairs for the years cited. Each year these and other
statistics are listed for all reserves in the Dominion.

THE SALE OF THE LAND

41

Crowfoot was right in saying that the introduction of cattle spelled the end of rations, for two years later Markle had already reduced the bi-weekly issue of ration to a weekly issue. In lieu of the ration system he introduced the "self-support" ration where persons with cattle could turn into the ration house a steer as credit for future rations and subsequently draw up to 15 lb. of meat per week until the credit was exhausted. By encouraging herding, he hoped to increase the number of beef cattle for the Blackfoot and, as it grew, withdraw the rations. He also hoped to provide an outside source of income by leasing the reserve coal seam to a mining company, but no white stepped forward to exploit this resource. (657)
(231)

Shortly thereafter Markle left the agency, but his influence continued to determine policy through his position as Inspector of Agencies for Alberta. Through H. E. Sibbald the programme of self-support proceeded. In 1906 Sibbald reported:

I consider these Indians are fairly well equipped, and by next spring should be in a position almost, if not entirely, to support themselves. The Indians will have enough beef animals of their own raising to supply the demand for the coming and succeeding years. Two more families have been added to the total self-support, and a number more to semi self-support list. . . (231)

On the dawn of the year of self-support a stroke of fate occurred. Nearly half the herd that had been so carefully cared for died of starvation in the deep snow. Most persons would have been discouraged by this providential intervention which would seem to postpone for many years the campaign's goal of self-support. But Markle and Sibbald were undaunted; under no circumstances would there be a return of rations; and the programme continued despite the scarcity of beef. They curtailed still more the issue of rations. By 1908 only the infirm were helped; the others had to shift for themselves. (231)

One lesson, however, was soon learned from these events. Cattle and haying were not enough to make the Blackfoot self-supporting. Besides, there was grumbling among the Indians. Occasionally cattle would disappear, killed surreptitiously by hungry Indians. It was necessary to provide some additional source of income to take these people through the long months between the end of coal-mining and the annual slaughter and sale of beef cattle. A possible solution to this problem had already been introduced in some of the reserves lying to the east. This was agriculture, and settlers had shown (433)
(231)

¹Dept. of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1906, p. 164.

CHAPTER THREE



The Economy

128 SINCE we are as much concerned with welfare as with the structure of an economic system, we have divided our considerations into the following parts: (1) the annual round; (2) sources of income; (3) exchange; (4) distributing mechanisms; (5) expenditures; (6) distribution of wealth and social classes.

651 In general the economy is managed by the agent. Acting as his
493 executors are nine white employees who carry on activities varying from book-keeping to directing the sowing of the crops. All but two of the white employees are paid salaries from the trust fund; the exceptions are the senior and junior clerk who, along with the agent, are paid by the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources.

651 The authority of this white staff in controlling the economy of
466 the reserve is derived not only from the sanctions of Canadian law; it also issues from the hard fact that these men control employment and the rewards of labour which are cash and purchase orders on village stores. The methods of control which they use, however, vary with the type of work and the personalities involved. At the mines where operations are localized, supervision by the mining instructor is relatively easy. The farming instructors, however, who must travel many miles over the reserve, cannot easily remove a man from his farm, and can only issue orders without being able to superintend in person their execution. Within these limits the instructors' actions vary from laissez-faire to authoritative. Their ability to elicit co-operation and their individual prestige depend upon the example of industriousness they themselves set, their tact in giving orders, and the personal warmth they manifest towards the Indians.

THE ECONOMY

55

Although production is carefully tended by the agent and the white staff, other aspects of the economy are not so closely under thumb. Exchange is controlled in the conversion of wheat and cattle into cash, but there is some merchandise passing in and out of the reserve as barter with neighbouring Indians and white settlers which escapes agency supervision. Moreover, through management of the Indians' cash accounts the agency partly determines the amount of cash that an Indian may have; yet the manner of spending lies to a great extent beyond the agent's control. Thus only in part is this an agency-controlled system. In general we shall see a white system of production welded onto a system of distribution in itself a modification of the original indigenous system.

THE ANNUAL ROUND

In buffalo days, the first thunder of spring was joyfully anticipated by all as the time when the owners of Medicine Pipes opened the sacred bundles, sang the songs of the thunder bird, and distributed tobacco to all the camp. These ceremonies continue today, but only the older people look forward to them with eagerness. The younger ones are eager for a different reason. In April now annuities from the Blackfoot trust fund are paid. The children are released from school for the day. The Indians who have waited for months flock to towns nearby to buy clothing, groceries, and household articles. Quite a number, seeking variety and better bargains, board the train to Calgary where in small groups they stroll through the stores of the business district or rest on the wooden benches of Chinese restaurants.

A few days later all are back on the reserve, and the spring enterprises begin. Every Indian team of horses and every tractor from the farm instructors' sheds is busy with ploughing and seeding. The frame houses near the cultivated fields bulge with relatives who have come to help. Calves are driven from their winter corrals to join the main herd started on its way to summer pasture lands.

Meanwhile the old people have convened to a secluded site for the Tobacco Dance, and are singing the opening songs of the Beaver Bundles. On a gala day about a week later Indians from all over the reserve come to watch gleefully, while, for instance, the man with buffalo-hoof rattle dances clownishly around the circle. A few listen

TRIBE UNDER TRUST

TABLE II

*Reserve income in various classifications
over four decades, according to percentage**

	1897	1908	1918	1928	1938
Agricultural products..	11.0	16.6	72.2	57.2	6.9
Beef cattle.....	.0	.0	2.8	6.8	14.6
Wages.....	5.0	15.7	7.8	1.5	1.2
Trapping.....	0.8	1.6	0.8	0.1	0.2
Other industries.....	6.3	54.1	10.5	2.2	16.6
Annuities, etc.....	76.9	.0	5.9	32.2	60.5
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Cash income.....	\$36,829	\$36,855	\$191,868	\$270,760	\$201,712

*CI. Annual Reports, Department of Indian Affairs, for appropriate year.

Table II presents the sources of income in a slightly different form. It shows in percentage terms the relative contribution of the big items over a period of several decades. It also gives an idea of the changes in importance of these items. *Income from agricultural products* includes grain, hay, potatoes. *Wages* includes agency interpreter's pay, wages paid by the agency from trust funds, and estimates of money earned by working off the reserve for whites. *Other industries* comprises mainly horse raising and mining. *Annuities* means treaty money, issues of blankets, clothing, household utensils, etc., from the trust or Dominion government funds as cash or their cash values.

From the table, it is obvious that: (1) Agriculture has fallen off in importance to the lowest it has ever been as a source of income. (2) Beef income has been steadily growing. (3) The importance of other industries has increased with the decline of agriculture. (4) Annuities are proportionately larger sources of income during poor years of farming. In good years agriculture can still account for a large percentage of the income. In such poor years as 1938 annuities are the mainstay.

What we want to know, however, are the sources of income for the individual which lie behind the figures of this table. Some of the money for interest and annuities does not go to the Indians but to white employees. Other sums, like those from beef, are paid by the beef producer to the men who harvest hay and round up the herd. It is consequently better in dealing with sources of income to assume the viewpoint of the Indian.

THE ECONOMY

63

built a big shed to house all these things, and he was told that this was for all his implements. When he was through with a machine he stored it in his shed. He also had a home and bought all the furniture and clothing for his wife and children. The agent would put all the money in three piles on pay day. He put the \$300 in one pile to take then. He put \$150 in another pile to have at Christmas time. He put \$400 in another pile for spring. This was after all the bills were paid. On the farm then Sleigh might be short of some such things as sweatpads for the horses or sugar. He would write an order and send a boy to any store in Gleichen. The boy took the note, and the storekeeper would send the goods to him. This was in the spring when they could not go to town. Later he would drive into the store and pay the bills.

Sleigh had everything and this made him feel good. At meal times he would have the table set, look at the food, and all would look fine. Then Sleigh thought he would do his best to keep his life that way all the time. At haying time he went to camp in the prairies and cut hay every day. He made two big stacks for the horses. He had a few cattle also. After haying, Sleigh went back to the farm, and the crop was ripe for cutting and binding. There was threshing, and the granaries were full. The rest he kept in his barn. Winter came, and he hauled hay to the barn to keep the horses fat all winter. He went to the white neighbors across the railroad tracks and saw new implements which he bought. He went into one barn and saw brushes and curry combs for the horses. He bought these and started feeding the horses oats; he had four horse blankets hanging in the barn. When it was cold, one horse might not feel like eating, and he put a blanket on the horse to make it eat better. Four horses might be used in the winter for going to town. He shod three of them. If horses are treated well, they will not have to be whipped but will do the work in a lively way.

Sleigh was at work every morning at seven. The agent went around early and felt pleased to see him working.

Sleigh always said, "Good morning" to the agent and "takes every word from him" (the expression used when a dutiful son heeds his father's injunctions). If he had jobs to do, he did them first before going to the Sun Dance. He did not have to worry about clothing or groceries, for he kept right on working. But when the work was done, he took out his tipi and lived at the Sun Dance like an Indian. He did his best both in farming and in the Indian way.

While some of the statistical material offered by the informant may be doubted, the picture in general seems accurate for the time. With wartime prices almost any amount of wheat raised could produce an income gratifying to Indians.

The story of the agricultural venture on the reserve may be seen graphically in Table III, where wheat sown is shown on one curve, wheat produced on the other. Acreage under cultivation as well as the number of farmers increased during the early twenties. But right at that time prices and returns began to sink. In the next ten years, though there was roughly constant acreage, only three good crops occurred. At first all continued doggedly to farm. But drought would burn the crop brown; hail and wind flatten the nearly ripened

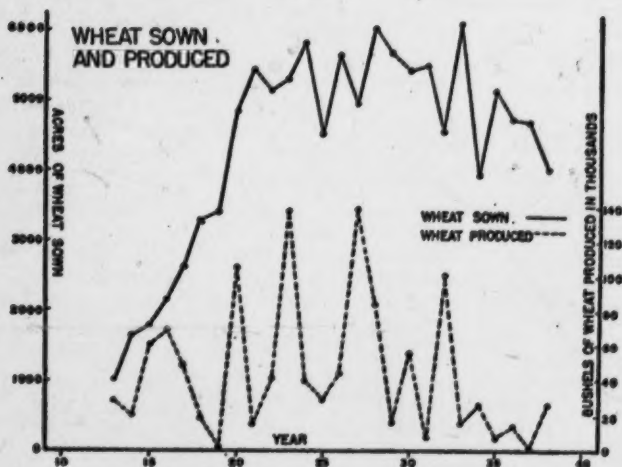
241
177
511
[657]241
483
178

64

TRIBE UNDER TRUST

241 plants; hot sun after a soaking rain mature the stalk but not the grain. In 1928 there was a good crop that spurred the farmers for another year, but the following years brought almost less than ever before and even that diminished. Farming was no longer the expected "open sesame"; people were discouraged, abandoned their fields, and moved back to the less affluent friendliness of the river community.

TABLE III



657 For whites, busy each hour of the day making a living, to be idle
241 is to become demoralized. The agency feared idle Indians would react the same way. The agent sent the farmers back to the farms. He was not so much interested in production as the prevention of idleness; better be unproductively active than idle. First the farm instructors cajoled the Indians to return to the land. Though some might submit for one year, they would not go through the motions of farming every year just to please the farm instructor or the agent. By 1938, the agency paid from the trust funds to have the Indians work. Two dollars per acre were paid a man to plough his own land and another two dollars to seed it. If after the effort there were a

THE ECONOMY

65

crop, the farmer could make a little more by selling it. This induced some to continue through the grim thirties. Those who did were further puzzled in 1941 during the wheat-glut of the first years of World War II when, having long been paid to work their farms, they were paid \$4 per acre for not ploughing the land. The white man's ways were totally irrational. 657 241

Agriculture could not continue in this way. Something had to be done to increase the chances of a crop and provide a reward for a season's toil. Accordingly, an experimental project of small, intensively cultivated, irrigated plots was started in 1940. Eight young farmers, selected because of their industriousness, were paid \$5 per week for groceries while they cultivated their plots under the guidance of a farm instructor. The first year they had crops which brought several hundred dollars to each farmer. Some felt that it was worth-while and were eager to continue. This is probably one answer to agricultural stability on the reserve.

It should be noted that these have been hard years for white farmers too. But the much larger farming units (400 acres and upwards as compared with the usual seeding of 40 acres of wheat for the Indians), more efficient mechanization and some use of irrigation, more flexible financing techniques, and most of all the watchful care of a man who has farming "in his blood" result in greater returns for the white farmer. It is possible that some of the Blackfoot land is properly marginal and should be withdrawn from cultivation at present. Like other areas in Alberta, some strips are blowing and eroding. Certainly the Indians all claim that "the best land was sold in 1911," though they may only perceive the results of skilful farming. In any case the reserve lies squarely in the middle of a belt subject to cataclysmic hail-storms. Whites so situated suffer too, but the larger acreages are not so frequently entirely hailed out. Many whites are also protected by hail insurance. Since these rates are exceedingly high, no Indian carries this coverage. 171 241 134 241 132 456

Without irrigation, agriculture cannot be expected to produce a steady income for the Indians. Although agriculture has increased the income of the Blackfoot more than any other single factor, no man will work long and vigorously with a five-to-one chance of failure unless the return compensates. While war prices have raised the reward, uncertainty makes dry farming of questionable value as the main economic peg. To have a prosperous, contented community requires more than a few hundred dollars every fifth year. 241 433

CHAPTER FOUR

Some Social Effects of the Economy

IN THE preceding chapter we presented a detailed picture of the workings of the reserve economy. Here, standing back a step to gain perspective, we consider certain direct effects of this economy on the social life of the reserve, first descriptively and then from the viewpoint of welfare. 128

TRENDS IN THE ECONOMY

The trust funds, under agency management, made possible the introduction of white technology to the Blackfoot. In addition, there have been certain effects which we may summarize as follows: 133
(1) the Indian has been reduced to the status of worker in an agency-managed enterprise; (2) the Blackfoot system of distribution within the tribe has been displaced or transformed; (3) the population has been forced to turn to the white economy for satisfaction of certain needs. This section is devoted to presenting the basis for these propositions. 177

(1) We have observed that the trust fund was initially conceived as a device for assisting individual Indians to become independent workers.¹ Because the agency saw a gradually increasing need for supervision, it assumed a greater managerial role. The sum initially set aside as a loan fund for farmers was never used. Through carelessness, inefficiency, and lack of foresight, these farmers lost their autonomy as producers. The same trend was noted with respect to beef production and coal mining. In time other activities came into the hands of the agency. Though dry wheat farming could not be centralized under the existing distribution of cultivated fields, the irrigation project of 1941 with a farm instructor present at all times continued the trend. Where unified operation was not possible, 657
426
657
433
241
233
316
241

¹Cf. pp. 42, 49.

657 unified control began. The farmer was handed his seed grain and
483 was paid by the agency to plough and sow his land. The cash re-
[241] turns were doled out at the discretion of the agency. Similar control
[464] was extended to haying and trapping operations. The agency con-
trols almost every job for cash wages, to say nothing of the all-
important periodic issues of farm equipment, horses, clothing, and
food.

657 During the eighties and nineties of the preceding century, gar-
466 dening, haying, and cattle raising were carried out under the direc-
464 tion of an Indian head-man who supervised the requisite operations,
disposed of the product, and paid his men partly in welfare benefits
and services. But today each Indian is an individual worker for the
agency. The bargaining position of the head-man and his gang is
gone. The operation is fixed; the disposal of the product is out of
the hands of the worker; and the returns from his labour bring in
cash only. He is paid to work his own land and maintain his own
house. There remains only the option of accepting the opportunity
to work, or chancing agency disapproval and subsisting on rations.

657 Except for the agency's primary obligation for the welfare of the
Indians and its lack of special interest in showing a profit, its role
is similar to that of a business enterprise. An important goal is to
develop the reserve using wherever possible the labour resources of
the resident population. The criteria of successful management, like
a balance sheet for directors and stockholders, are its annual reports
of production and income that go to Ottawa. When these figures
stand high, administrative responsibility has been fulfilled, and the
organization that is run for the benefit of the Indians is deemed to
be doing its best. It brings the Indians the maximum returns, and
they, by participating as labourers and receiving the net cash re-
turns, are provided with their living.

657 The Blackfoot's standard of living has undoubtedly been raised.
511 Through careful planning they have few lean months and more than
just annuities as a backlog for depressed years. The poor are neither
so threadbare as those found on other reserves, nor are the wealthy
living in idle luxury. This result has not been brought about solely
by managerial considerations of efficiency; the Indians themselves
urged many a paternalistic feature, in the interest of retaining and
extending this basic guarantee of subsistence.

621 (2) The former groups under a head-man or chief constituted
571 not only the co-operative labour battalion but the group among
178

177 same bundle would have been considered a valuable asset in the
178 competition for exhibition of generosity, to say nothing of its super-
602 natural benefits, and the possessor would have been aided by the
556 pooled resources of his large circle of kinfolk.

177 Yet there remain significant differences between white and
433 Indian consumers. Of low status in terms of skills which they can
contribute, their returns are less and their share proportionately
smaller. Few Indians have been able to alter their lot through edu-
cation, even if they normally could expect employment of their
skills off the reserve. In capital assets, they are paupers, for property
of value in the white economy is usually theirs only for use and not
for disposal. As participants in the white world they would be living
without opportunity for social advance on the bottom rung, with
inadequate diet, the cheapest of clothing, and the most dismal of
houses to rent.

177 This impoverishment not only occurred through dependence on
436 the white economy, but dependence redefined wealth itself. Starting
177 from a period when wealth was viewed in terms of horses transfer-
436 able between all Indians, it became increasingly necessary to deal
437 with whites. In these dealings the Indian pony quickly lost its value.
177 Later barter took place, but gradually transactions were restricted
651 to a currency basis. Now only the agency converts certain defined
436 commodities into cash. With conversion rates determined by the
agent and the world market, Indian labour and produce achieve
value for the white economy. In some respects the rate of conversion
is the same for Indian and white, yet in others, e.g. wages, seeking
to accomplish the most with limited operating funds, the agency
has set conversion at a lower rate than the one found off the reserve.

177 While the trust funds help mitigate some of the discrepancies
436 between the two worlds, the Blackfoot are still far from possessing
177 certain key advantages of the white citizen. On the reserve there
436 is little freedom or encouragement of enterprise. Skills of value in
the white economy are fostered to a point, but their development
[426] as an enterprise is minimal. The possibility of loans from the trust
[453] fund has not been realized, probably because individuals have not
[421] enough private property to offer as security to make the loan accept-
able to Ottawa. Certainly banks and credit houses are excluded
since the property of these wards is inalienable. Moreover, the
emphasis given by the agency and the council of chiefs has been on
collective advancement rather than on using the trust funds to

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMY

109

capitalize individual enterprise. Thus, except for the part-time vendor and the seasonal services performed in the mining village, intra-reserve enterprise has remained undeveloped. This stands in considerable contrast with many reservations in the United States where stores, garages, and filling stations are owned and operated by Indians. 177
472

Whether or not the encouragement of enterprise for a fee is desirable for the Blackfoot reserve is debatable. From the point of view of the writers, the critical point is that the Indians lie midway in social structure between two types of economy. The one is the indigenous system where goods and services flow on a basis of reciprocal obligations between members of a common group of kinsmen. Though the prestige-gaining treasures of the system required a fee, as on entering an age-graded society, subsistence was based on reciprocal obligations. The poor were either not poor in this basic sense or were isolated individuals without kinsmen. The other economy, the white system, places even subsistence on a fee basis and dissolves the community of obligations within most groups beyond the family. On the reserve services for a fee have entered; dealings with whites are necessarily on such a basis, and between Indians this pattern is also found occasionally, e.g., taxi service to the coal-mine. However, the mechanisms of distribution within the reserve and the relation of Indian employer to employee are still based on reciprocal obligations. 177
493
571
437

Indeed, until now the Blackfoot seem to have resisted the market economy. Indians have persistently argued that the agency should assume the obligation of providing basic economic security. They have been unwilling ever since signing the treaty to adopt the white view of satisfying the basic needs for warmth and sustenance on a fee basis. This was a compelling reason for settling on the reserve and later for selling a portion of it. The agent, instead of being a manager of their affairs is considered the dispenser of necessities, which have changed through the years.¹

Individualism they have, in the tradition of other Plains Indians. A Blackfoot might take whatever sacred bundles appealed to him or, if he wished, invent a new bundle. He might go to war alone or, in company with a war party, endanger for his own interests the safety of the group, without serious repercussions. In camp he was the law that protected his interests. Many of the same individualistic 571

¹As this relates to chiefs and the extended family, cf. p. 130, p. 161.

110

TRIBE UNDER TRUST

571 ingredients that went into these native cultural patterns enter today into raising a fine herd of horses or harvesting a bumper crop of wheat. Yet the distinction is clear in the Blackfoot mind that the old enterprises were never carried on at a sacrifice of basic security.

657 Today the reserve distribution and security system is balanced between two opposing forces. To the extent that the trust funds can provide them, this security will be a rallying point for many who seek even greater benefits. To the extent that these are provided, the trust funds will stabilize the present system. The other side of the picture reveals the inroads of white economic ideology, dissolving important distributive channels and isolating groups that formerly stood together. This has fertilized the ground for a competitive market system, so that when valued skills have been obtained, disintegration of the social body may continue. But at present these Indians are unable through poverty and unwilling through taste to forego security for potential benefits, though most make every effort to have white produce and their own basic security too.

ADEQUACY OF THE ECONOMY TO THE NEEDS

121 If the reserve economy has provided basic security, we may inquire in what respects it is adequate to satisfy the other needs of the Indians. Needs are determined by the report of a person experiencing them and, on the assumption that all behaviour satisfies some conscious or unconscious needs, by inference from an individual's behaviour. Accordingly we shall first ask whether any of the needs that a white man feels should exist on the reserve, do in actuality exist. Then we shall observe other Indian reserves and ask whether the apparent needs of these reserves also exist on the Blackfoot reserve. Finally we shall consider the conscious needs of the Blackfoot reserve, studying their relation to the economy.

511 *Needs as judged by whites.* The first comment of most whites hearing of the Blackfoot economic system is that the Blackfoot have their chief needs cared for. They have basic economic security: their rations obviate worry about food, the houses built on the reserve with trust funds are rent-free, the schools and the hospital are free, there are no taxes, the extra annuities for the aged provide old-age security. Judging by this, the Blackfoot have nothing to worry about, and hence must be the most care-free people in the world.

TABLE X

COMPARATIVE DATA ON
TRIBAL INCOMES FOR SELECTED RESERVES DURING 1934

<i>Reserve</i>	<i>Chief Sources of Income</i>	<i>Amount of Income</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Per Capita Income</i>
Kenora, Ont.	Trapping and fishing	\$203,000	380	534
Ile à la Crosse, Sask.	Trapping and fishing	\$26,000	2,282	144
Northern Blackfoot, Alta.	Mines, annuities, beef	183,000	765	239
Blood, Alta.	Agriculture	68,000	1,293	53
Hobbema, Alta.	Agriculture, trapping	70,000	1,065	66
New Westminster, B.C.	Fishing, canning industry	137,000	1,364	102
Fort Resolution, N.W.T.	Trapping and fishing	154,000	1,722	83
Six Nations, Ont.	Wages, agriculture, annuities	172,000	4,908	45

That this income may fluctuate widely can be seen from the fact that in 1938 Kenora income dropped to \$153,000 and Fort Resolution to \$25,000, while the Blackfoot income rose to \$202,000. Such considerations indicate that the Blackfoot are one of the richest Indian groups in Canada.

This advantageous position is due almost entirely to the benefits derived from the trust fund. The Six Nations of Ontario also have a sizable trust fund, but due to a larger population these people have fewer benefits.

Unfortunately we have no data available to indicate the relative value of the resources of the various reserves. Our only first-hand information is derived from casual inspection of the Blood Reserve, situated in southern Alberta about 120 miles south of the Blackfoot reserve. This reserve is considerably larger than the Blackfoot, but it is similar geographically, being situated in the high plains region with extensive grass lands which, like the Blackfoot reserve, cover certain coal deposits. Though its population is nearly twice as large as the Blackfoot, its annual income usually stands considerably lower. We believe this is due largely to lack of capital to develop these resources. Despite the coal deposits, no systematic mining has taken place. Even with more land to cultivate and more people to cultivate it, no more acreage was under cultivation on the Blood reserve in 1934 than on the Blackfoot. Six to eight thousand acres were used for small grain on both reserves. Furthermore, the size

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMY

117

of the herds and consequently the returns from cattle have stood consistently lower. Only in terms of the number of horses do the Bloods exceed the Blackfoot, and it is likely that these are in quality more like the Blackfoot range horses than their sturdier work animals. We infer that the resources of the Blackfoot are no greater than those of the Blood but that the trust fund has enabled the Blackfoot to develop what they have. 433

In many kinds of property the Blackfoot also exceed the Bloods. Despite a larger population, the Bloods have only 95 houses on the reserve as compared with 166 on the Blackfoot reserve. In actual numbers, the Bloods own more tools, wagons, and implements than the Blackfoot, but on a per capita basis the Blackfoot exceed. Judging by personal observation, we would say that the Blackfoot houses have on the average more furniture and that their clothing is of a better quality than the Bloods. 511

In other respects the Blackfoot are at least the equal of other reserves. All Indian education comes through mission schools or day-schools, and though its adequacy may be questioned, it seems to be fairly uniform from reserve to reserve within a province. In health the Blackfoot are also as well off. The trust fund supports a first-class hospital, whereas medical care is available to most other reserves through missions. Drinking, gambling, and prostitution are at a minimum on the Blackfoot reserve, and we judge this to be true of other reserves as well because of the uniform policing system of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. [71] [87] [743] [273] [525] [548]

From the point of view of the administrator the needs of the Blackfoot reserve are satisfied equally well, if not better, than on most other reserves. They are one of the wealthiest groups of Indians in Canada, and little could be gained for them in Ottawa by appealing for more on the basis of these recognized needs. 511

Indian needs as expressed by the Blackfoot. What are the needs of the Indians as expressed by themselves, and how well are they satisfied by the economy? We may distinguish two types of Indians on the basis of needs: (a) Those whose needs concern mainly the satisfaction of the demands of food, good shelter, respectable clothing, and transportation; (b) those who, despite having these needs fairly well satisfied, still strive for things over and above these. Let us consider the two types, bearing in mind that they are arbitrary and for illustrative purposes only.¹ [21]

¹Cf. pp. 80-82.

511 because, like most whites, we do not bring our "best" things when
[123] camping. In the light of our former considerations of standard of
living where we found that most Blackfoot would be glad to have
more food, better clothing, warmer houses, and more adequate
furnishings, we can see that the level of living aspired to is not
achieved by some under the existing conditions.

511 What groups seem to be represented in this type that asks for
177 more than the primary satisfactions? In general they are the younger
Blackfoot, the more energetic, "progressive" ones who desire to
have some of the features of existence found in white homes.

511 What has happened to make these differences in the reception
177 of the benefits of the trust fund? Our interpretation is a historical
657 one, to which three main factors contribute. First, the trust fund
does satisfy the needs of the older generation brought up to expect
little more than subsistence. Second, there has been an increase in
expectations among many due to the decade of prosperity after the
surrender of land. Third, a new generation has grown up which is
unfamiliar with the difficulties of its fathers, and has taken for
granted the advantages accruing from the trust fund, and which
has gained new standards from closer association with whites.

511 We have indicated that the type whose needs concern mainly
493 the primary satisfactions is made up largely of old Indians. They
are the ones who lived through the first thirty years on the reserve
when real hunger was common. They received thankfully periodic
gifts of clothing from the government, for they were often cold.
With an axe they built their own houses and very gradually added
such luxuries as glass windows, milled doors, and cast-iron stoves.
They planted their own gardens not with plough or hoe but with a
tipi stake in one hand and seed in the other. They saw their children
grow thin, and for want of sufficient food fall prey to disease. They
abhorred all that was white, for the whites had brought this degra-
dation upon them. They looked with nostalgia to the days when
the Blackfoot ranged the plains. Yet their present wants could be
satisfied with trust funds, and though many were loath to cede more
land to the whites, all had to admit, after living a few years with
the benefits of the trust fund, that life was easier than it had been
for many years. These people were satisfied with rations, the yearly
granting of clothing, and the opportunity to have a little more from
time to time by working on the roads. They settled down content
to review their exploits and those of their fathers against the Crees
and the Crows.

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMY

121

While these people were satisfied with the results of the trust funds, others were eagerly taking advantage of the new conditions to do more than satisfy the primary needs. These more energetic ones were astonished by the abundant life during the first decade after the surrender of land. They prospered with the favourable growing conditions and the boom prices for wheat. Not only did they satisfy their basic needs, they had more than they ever dreamed of. This was the good life when their larders were full, their families well dressed, their houses filled with new furniture from the mail-order houses. Just as prosperous years in the world of white commerce set the never-to-be-forgotten standard for "adequate" business, so these prosperous years firmly fixed standards of adequacy for many Indians. When farm prices sank and hot winds began to raise clouds of dust in the eroded fields, these people became dissatisfied with their diminished income. It hurt to sell each piece of furniture to pay for the more necessary features of this "good life." They needed more food, clothing, furniture, farm machinery, and horses in order to repossess this departed day of glorious living. Even today these people need more to achieve their aspirations than the reserve offers.

Finally, a new generation has appeared, a generation brought up in the mission schools, unfamiliar with the strivings of its fathers to obtain food. These people have heard of life on the old reserve during the first thirty years, but these tales concern old times and not life as it is today. They take rations and other benefits of the trust fund for granted, even though they know that all Indians do not receive them. These are their rights because they are paid for with their own money. Furthermore, if only because they know English better than their parents, they have been in closer contact with whites, have observed the amenities of white living conditions, and have aspired to partake of some of them. Although Blackfoot may live better than they did thirty years ago, still they do not live as well as whites. Encouraged by the schools and Indian Affairs propaganda, they look upon themselves as people who will eventually live just like whites.

In our consideration of income similar types were also considered: (a) the propertyless young who work for wages, (b) those with property whose aspirations demand additional sources of income, (c) those with property whose needs appear to have been satisfied. These types were constructed to show occupation as related to property. They appear to be directly related to our present consider-

648 achieved his position the Blackfoot way. Twenty years after treaty,
622 in 1897, there were eleven bands and fourteen chiefs, of whom three
were elected, six appointed by the agent, and five who had achieved
rank in the classical manner.

621 In the first decades of reserve life, the people adapted themselves
36d with as few changes as possible. The chief settled with his band
around him on one of the flats along the Bow River. Except for
periods of outside work, these villages of shacks and tipis were occu-
pied throughout the year. Occasionally a chief led a small group
into the northern bush country to hunt deer, but these hunts were
not entirely necessary for food because beef was issued weekly.
Rather, people wanted hides for moccasins or weasel-tail coats, or
perhaps they were merely restless, finding it irksome always to
remain in the same place.

622 Though deprived of his function as director on the march and
433 partly superseded as arbiter by the agent, the chief still controlled
571 much of the economic destiny of the band. He was more than ever
a distributor of necessities, dispensing not only food among the
needy members of his band, but also tobacco, blankets, clothing,
and materials for building shacks. All his possessions were at the
disposal of the band. As in the famine days just after treaty, a good
chief would share his food and supplies with the members of his
band down to the last bag of pemmican. If a man wanted a team
of horses or a wagon with a hay rack, usually the chief was the man
to see, for the chief owned the implements. In return the chief would
receive a portion of the man's earnings in money, labour, or kind.
When a neighbouring white rancher needed help at roundup,
haying, or harvest time, he approached the band chief. Were the
conditions satisfactory, a group of band members was instructed to
move near the rancher and perform the required tasks. After the
work was completed, the chief was paid, and he distributed part of
the pay to his men. Moreover, most band villages had gardens at
one time, where potatoes and turnips were grown. At planting time
and when cultivation was necessary, the chief called out the young
men of the band. In return, the garden produce was dispensed among
the hungry during the winter.

622 It was still possible for young men to attach themselves to the
house of a chief in the role of a "hired man," to aid the chief by
caring for his horses, gathering those strayed out on the range,
procuring provisions from the store, and running sundry errands on
business of the chief. In return these men were treated by the chiefly

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

137

chiefly powers in the Indian Act. Doubtless in the interest of administrative harmony and of training, the agent has permitted wider latitude of action. There was no blocking of the council's resolution to review the estimates of expenditures of interest money before their submission to Ottawa. Increasing annuity payments, additional benefits to the aged, and other achieved proposals for the use of interest money have not been placed legally under the jurisdiction of the council. For the council to act as an advisory group in settling civil suits is not provided by law, and chiefs certainly exceed their vested authority when they investigate the efficiency of the agency's collection of rents from the lease of tribal lands. 643 657

Such practices, while exceedingly desirable from the point of view of utilizing the council, have one effect of confusing the members, for nowhere is there a working statement of the council's power. Certain measures advocated by the council are realized, while others appear to vanish at the end of the meetings. As one might expect, conflicts between the agent and the council do arise. In this event the agent has, of course, the upper hand, for though the law does not permit him to vote in the meeting, his duty in forwarding requests to Ottawa with or without endorsement may amount to more than a vote. Sanction is necessary by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs before a measure can become effective.¹ Thus though maintaining the appearance of democratic processes, the agent finds it imperative to side-track certain proposals. In view of this procedure, a somewhat cynical comment illustrates the attitude of one of the chiefs:

Some cases demand an unanimous decision of the chiefs, others not. It depends upon the subject. I do not know why, but if the Indian Department makes the proposal, only a majority is necessary. But in 90 per cent of the cases where chiefs have suggested anything, it must be unanimously carried out, and even then the agent may or may not recommend it or send it to Ottawa.

As many chiefs are unaware of the statutory limitation of their authority and view themselves as legislators of a kind, the council position can be highly frustrating.

Moreover, in the tribe at large, the Blackfoot increase the confusion by continuing to endow the chiefs with the old aura of authority in spite of the new conditions. A man may still say, "The chiefs are the head of everything that goes on. Anything that happens, you refer to them." Few seem to realize that chiefs are no 622 178 433 829

¹The Indian Act, Sec. 90A.

622 longer directors of their followers, sole dispensers of benefits, or
178 autonomous authorities within their circle of followers. These func-
● 433 tions have largely disappeared with the new agency-managed
[829] economy. A director is no longer needed where people work inde-
[464] pendently and scattered over the reserve. As men have their own
[735] fields to tend, they are too busy to seek employment as members
of a chief's haying gang. Jobs for earning cash are given out directly
by the agency or the farm instructors. Today a chief may have to
round up his own horses before going to town, for the young "hired
men" are busy elsewhere. Now that others have wealth equal or
surpassing the chief's, there are many capable of helping the poor.
Indeed, because of the broader distribution of wealth, there are few
who correspond to the tattered, hungry persons of buffalo days.
Without his followers at his side, the chief's influence as arbitrator
and keeper of the peace has been limited. Roads are better, people
more accessible, and the agency influence reaches into every corner
of the reserve.

622 Another aspect of the old pattern leading to confusion is the
643 question of a chief's jurisdiction. In theory the elective system of
178 today implies a council made up of members chosen from the reserve
at large with all chiefs accessible to every man. To some extent this
occurs, for certain chiefs are consulted by a wide number of persons
on the reserve. There is a lingering feeling, nevertheless, that each
chief represents a certain group in the council of chiefs, just as the
council of chiefs in buffalo days was made up of the leaders of
[602] separate bands. Frequently persons criticize all the chiefs except
one, and will brook no criticism of that one from any quarter. Behind
this usually lies a kin relationship to a particular chief; one is de-
fending one's relative to whom one appeals in difficulties. In fact
kinship is still the strongest factor binding a group of "constituent-
followers" to a particular chief. There are also cases where a man
may identify himself with a traditional band. If the head of this
nominal band is a council member, he constitutes the man's chief.
Geographical nearness, even unsupported by kinship or band affilia-
[666] tion, can reinforce identification with a certain chief. The system
of electing chiefs on such a background leads to difficulties. Votes
are cast frequently along family (the most important factor), band,
and geographical lines, and failure of a candidate to be elected may
leave a given group with the feeling of being without representation
in the council. Instead of looking out for the welfare of all, certain

NF6-Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

142

TRIBE UNDER TRUST

[657] Because so few Blackfoot speak and write English adequately, this
[191] letter is similar to many received by the agent. This impression of immaturity is furthered by the constant appeal for funds from a given account in the agency, and the common practice of working only when in need of cash.

643
[657] Consider also meetings of the councils of chiefs. The chiefs enter
[291] the room feet clad in moccasins, wearing somewhat shabby suits
[516] or brightly coloured cowboy shirts, their heads often covered with
[191] red bandanas on top of which sit broad-brimmed, dusty hats. Some sit on chairs, others find greater comfort sitting tailor fashion on the floor. Most chiefs must communicate through an interpreter, and those who speak English often use broken English with phrasing comical to the white ear. In view of the white tendency to consider seriously only words addressed by persons who dress correctly, speak in proper ways, and know approved decorum, the agency cannot consider the chiefs equal partners in the direction of reserve affairs.

657 Like other agencies, the Blackfoot agency's policies are determined in part by the expectations of the Indian Affairs Branch at Ottawa. A good reserve is one where production is aimed at maintaining or achieving a level considered adequate for the people. There should be a low index of crime, divorce, disease and, if possible, few complaints by Indians or their white neighbours. To the extent possible there should be a decreasing rate of expenditure out of public funds and an increasing rate of school attendance. In these respects the Blackfoot agency stands well. Through competent agency management production has been maintained fairly well in certain respects and increased in others. We have no indices to compare crime, divorce, and complaint rates from this agency with other agencies, but judging by the tendency for Indians to remain on the reserve, complaints at least should be low from the Blackfoot area. It is probable that the mild encouragement given to Blackfoot religious ceremonials is considered a step towards maintaining native moral sanctions. Certainly the Blackfoot hospital offers a health service that surpasses that of many communities in the vicinity. Thanks to the trust fund, public money expended for the reserve has reached a minimum, and nearly every child goes to school.

[796]
[743]
[652]
[871]
[434] With respect to the Indians three administrative principles appear to be operative. First is the principle of preventing the Indians from having too great benefits from the trust fund at any one time, lest they become demoralized. On this ground many

TRIBE UNDER TRUST

657 Such events confirm the agent's belief that the Blackfoot will not
643 be ready for many years to accept greater responsibility in control-
622 ling their own destiny.

622 Actually the example reveals also a more fundamental conflict.
602 The failure of a geographical principle of representation by chiefs
is misconstrued by the agent as shunning a responsibility. Chiefly
jurisdiction is nebulous, but it is traditional that chiefs in any case
represent kinsmen and that followers of chiefs are usually kinsmen,
no matter how scattered. Indeed, a man may go miles to air his
problems to a kinsman who is chief rather than confide in a more
accessible chief who lives in the neighbourhood. It is not surprising,
therefore, that the principle of geographical representation still suc-
cumbs to the traditional principle of kin representation. It is inter-
esting that by the latter device the Anglo-Saxon problem of dis-
tinguishing between duty and personal interests, which include the
family, and status obligations, does not occur since a chief conceives
it as part of his duty to care for his relatives. Thus in this case there
need be no impugning of Blackfoot chiefs, if judged in the light of
their own definition of responsibilities.

657 The resultant of these policies has been, first and foremost, a
continuous unresolved dispute between the tribe and the agency
over uses of the trust fund. The Blackfoot regard the trust fund as
their own money, while the agency feels obligated to prevent its
control by Indians for fear of unsagacious use. Attempts by Black-
foot to achieve greater control are resisted by the agent with legal
reinforcement. This in turn produces indignation and conniving on
the part of the tribe with the result that agency feelings about Indian
immaturity are confirmed.

Secondly, those measures which have been accepted by the
agency at the suggestion of the council and have become a part of
reserve practice have tended to make the Indians more dependent
on the trust fund. Besides the various relief measures, agency man-
agement of the cattle herd, cash jobs given out by the agency staff,
and material assistance to new farmers have contributed to create
[433] a social group that is highly dependent on the trust fund. Few
Indians leave the reserve for work in normal years (though white
prejudice is also a factor); there is little Indian commercial enter-
prise; some Indians say that those who have married into the Black-
foot tribe, for instance the coal miners, do more of the work than the
Blackfoot.

CHAPTER SIX



The Social Complex

IN THE preceding chapters we have shown two main changes. First, the introduction of the agency-controlled, subsistence economy has brought to an end the bands which in the past had served the economic function. The individual families, survivors of this dissolution, have been geared into the larger white economy on which the reserve as a whole has become dependent. Second, the demise of the band has brought about the end of chiefly power. Though chiefs still exist as members of the elected council, this political structure is formal in character and unsupported by social or economic factors indigenous to the Blackfoot. However, a realignment is gradually occurring in the direction of a representative council of chiefs. In this chapter we shall elaborate other aspects of these changes: (1) the relations of the reserve as a whole to the surrounding population, (2) the social interrelations within the reserve from the point of view of family structure, (3) these interrelations from the point of view of age.

THE RESERVE AS PART OF ALBERTA

The Indians live in the midst of an area which is predominantly white in population and Anglo-Saxon in outlook. To the white villages at their periphery Indians go to buy commodities and services. They attend the periodic movies in the town hall and play "snooky" in the local billiard parlour. In this interaction with whites, Indians are aware of a certain condescension, an expectation of deference, by the whites. They have long noticed that the white clerks wait first on white customers, and that without cash or purchase order from the agency on the counter nothing could be obtained.

829 work, and does not care how the Indians are getting along. So runs
the main theme of Blackfoot dissatisfaction. White employees of
657 the agency complain that Indians lack foresight and do not stay on
the job, that the benefits given them through the trust fund are
neglected, that with all the opportunities offered them the Indians
are ungrateful, try to swindle undeserved money from the agency,
and, if they succeed, only use the money for non-essentials, often at
the expense of the welfare of their children. They present a picture
of Indians thoroughly pauperized by, and dependent on, their bene-
fits. There are other dissatisfactions on each side, but these are the
main foci of irritation.

829 Our diagnosis indicates a social syndrome of malsatisfaction.
On the part of the Indians we see frustration of the need for politico-
economic self-expression. On the part of the white staff we see lack
of job satisfaction. Let us examine the mechanisms involved.

657 The advent of agency management of reserve production and
483 maintenance of peace has been relatively recent, mainly since 1910.
[241] At that time, introducing agriculture resulted in the breaking up of
[621] the residual band organization and the destroying of the social
importance of the few independent entrepreneurs. These changes
were necessary, for the Blackfoot had no rations at that time, and
most could not obtain sufficient food and clothing through their own
657 productive capacity. Accordingly, the Indians were easily relocated
241 on individual farms where it was hoped these needs would be much
more adequately satisfied. However, the agency and the white staff
gradually assumed the managerial role in farming. They provided
seeds, later paid Indians to plough and plant, sent out the harvesting
657 gang, collected and marketed the produce. The story is much the
[293] same in cattle raising; wintering the stock, supplying feed, branding
[316] and rounding up the herd were gradually assumed by the white
[622] employees. The mine is also run for the Indians by a mining in-
structor. Though at first the agency reached the Indians through
their chiefs or headmen who still made decisions for keeping order,
it gradually assumed a greater share of even this function by direct
control over the reserve residents.

657 The result has been that the Indian as a producer and dweller
[177] on the reserve is now integrated directly with the agency and
through this channel with the white society. Only as a small con-
sumer of white merchandise and services is he integrated directly
with the white world. The role of the Blackfoot has become that of

DIAGNOSIS OF RESERVE NEEDS

177

a labourer or even an onlooker on an agency-managed grain-, cattle-, and coal-producing establishment. From a politically independent people the tribe has been reduced to a form of peonage. 657

A second factor has been the failure of the original farming venture, the success of which meant the difference between mere existence and an ample income. When the Indians originally adopted farming, it was regarded as a means for becoming wealthy. In the Blackfoot mind there is a definite association of wealth with power, for as we indicated, the chiefs in the past were necessarily wealthy persons. Through farming the prediction of Many Stars at the time of the treaty would be realized: "All will be chiefs." This was true in good years, when Indians could invite friends and relatives to their well-furnished homes for ostentatious give-aways. They could make trips to neighbouring reserves, there to continue the display of generosity. Best of all, they might invest in a sacred bundle as a further token of concrete achievement and as supernatural insurance against the vagaries of weather and fortune. This had always been the Blackfoot way of indicating change of status, as conditioned by years of experience with a plentiful buffalo supply and the risks of warfare that might reduce one's wealth to nothing overnight. If any followed the agency's counsel to save, a succession of poor or indifferent crops quickly consumed the backlog, and there was nothing to show for the effort. 241 241 556 [574] [184] [718] [454]

These two factors, the assumption of economic and political management and the failure of reserve enterprises to produce a return commensurate with Indian expectations, have produced frustration of the needs for political and economic self-expression. Since the council of chiefs is an impotent body and since the last vestiges of political control were removed with the scattering of the Blackfoot onto familial farms, a political void has been created. In good times this arrangement produces no consequences, for there is opportunity for self-expression in a gratifying Blackfoot social life. Participation, however, is reduced by lean years. There results a system of devices which can only produce satisfaction in the rare times of abundance. 829 [657] [433]

The question arises why in their dissatisfaction the Indians blame the agency. The system would run much more smoothly if Blackfoot themselves assumed the blame for failure and, as the white employees propose, work harder. It is necessary to realize first that the agency is regarded as the seat of the chief, and chiefs 829 657

and daring on horse-stealing raids, as well as a display of generosity toward the less successful. No leader held real power over the members of the band. Social control was a function of the entire society. Ridicule and ostracism functioned as a principal means of maintaining order. A leader retained his position only so long as he displayed those characteristics that had propelled him to leadership and so long as he correctly read the temper of the band. A headman who thwarted the desires of his followers would soon find himself without anyone to lead. It was an efficient fluid society well suited to the Plains environment of the mid-nineteenth century.

In the 1880s, when Robert Hamilton was in his early teens, the age when a Blackfoot boy entered manhood, the buffalo days came to a sudden end. In 1882, the Blackfeet had made a successful hunt. In 1883, the hunt had been very poor. In 1884, the Blackfeet found no buffalo and endured a two-year starving time when as many as 25 percent of the tribe died of malnutrition and associated diseases. Dependent on the largess of the federal government for bare subsistence, the bands huddled near the government agency in shock and despair (FRC, 1883; Ewers, 1958:290-294; McFee, 1972).

An erosion of traditional tribal society began almost at once. The reservation agent's control over food supplies struck at the heart of Blackfoot pride and independence. Further, the relationship of traditional leaders to the federal establishment altered their position in the tribe. Rivalries between band leaders, such as Three Suns who sought to retain the old way of life and the more accommodating White Calf, created social divisions never completely healed. Although the Blackfeet had organized a kind of police force and established a law code under the direction of Agent John Wood as early as 1878, the system had supplemented rather than replaced traditional methods of social control. After 1885, federal Indian agents used the older leaders as a means of enforcing order on the reservation. The elders presided over the distribution of rations and acted as judges meting out punishment for infractions of reservation rules. With the estab-

[P. 61-A]

622
105

175
178
433

657
178

657
622
578

657
625
626

657
622
692

657
682
621

when Congress might order the termination of Blackfeet local government (H.R. 1916, S, 1914; S, 1917; S, 1918; NA 1916b; 41 Stat. 3).

Hamilton's success in helping obtain a second round of allotments for the Blackfeet was tempered by a personal set-back in 1919. Hamilton's prominence on the reservation and the legal background he acquired while working with Mark Baldwin had, years before, led to his appointment as a United States commissioner. The appointment lasted but one year, when it was discovered that Hamilton was accepting fees for his work. United States commissioners were salaried officials. Although Hamilton's fees were illegal, it was apparently done without fraudulent intent. He had never drawn his salary as commissioner and apparently thought his income from the office was derived from fees similar to the system used for clerks in federal courts. In 1919, a jury found him innocent of wrong doing, but he lost his position as commissioner (FRC, 1919).

Far more detrimental to the well-being of the Blackfeet was the consequence of the European war and postwar economic dislocation on the reservation's cattle industry. Authorities had long recognized that the Blackfoot Reservation was primarily suited to cattle and sheep grazing. The Allotment Act of 1907 had recognized the reservation's limitations for crop agriculture when allotting the principal part of it for grazing. Since the mid-1890s the federal government, using Blackfoot funds acquired from land sales, distributed cattle to adult tribal members. By 1910, the Blackfoot cattle herds through further distributions and natural increase were large enough to predict a reasonable level of success for the enterprise. A series of drought years and severe winters between 1900 and 1908 retarded the development of the industry, but sufficient stock remained to ensure recovery. The development of irrigated hay fields appeared to solve the problem of winter feed.

The government cattle program, however, had the effect of enriching a few Blackfeet while most languished. Full-blood members of the tribe continued to take more pride in their horse herds than in cattle. Mixed bloods found it relatively

[p.66-A]

159
657
663
423

159
662
663
461

433
657
178

433
657
233

657
233
184
471
[431]

Montana
Piegan

easy to barter Indian ponies for cattle. Consequently, Blackfoot cattle tended to end up in the hands of a few aggressive entrepreneurs. As early as 1902, only 47 Blackfeet had substantial cattle herds. The Office of Indian Affairs was aware of the monopolizing process on the reservation and acted to reverse the trend (NA, 1903).

The cattle question on the Blackfoot Reservation placed the government in a dilemma. The government tried to foster both the tribe's collective economic advancement and self-enterprise among individual members. The more ambitious, however, by their very aggressiveness, tended to defeat the government's effort to raise the general level of economic self-sufficiency. In a sense, the government was too successful in introducing capitalism to the Blackfeet, and it never solved the problem of reconciling an economic system based on creating winners and losers with a commitment to preventing losses. The reality that not every Blackfoot tribal member could be a successful entrepreneur did not mesh with government programs. Furthermore, intervention ensured discontent from every faction on the reservation.

The problem was further compounded by increasing pressure on the Office of Indian Affairs to establish grazing leases for outside cattlemen. Nearby ranchers had already found they could make individual arrangements with Blackfoot tribal members and bring their cattle onto the reservation. A grazing lease system was required to bring the problem of trespass cattle under control. Until the Blackfeet enlarged their cattle herds sufficiently to use the entire reservation, leasing to outside cattlemen appeared a reasonable method to increase Blackfoot income. At the same time the government was reluctant to tie up large amounts of reservation land in leases that might soon be allotted. Consequently, the government instituted a "permit system" on the reservation rather than a lease system. The permit system had the added advantage from the agent's point of view of not requiring approval from the tribal council.

Although the permit system had been instituted while Hamilton was away from the reser

[p. 66-B]

657
233
184
471
[437]

657
433
472

657
427
434

159
657
427

26: Wessel H-4,5 (no date) 1982
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Montana
Piegan

the return of drought reduced the Blackfoot cattle industry to only a few thousand head. Pressure by the cattle owners on agents to approve cattle sales proved irresistible when prices went over \$15.00 a hundredweight. Inevitably, the first to sell their cattle were the full bloods (NA, 1915a, 1915b, 1915c).

To meet the situation the government changed the cattle program once again. In 1915, with a modest beginning, the Office of Indian Affairs established a tribal cattle herd as a means of teaching the full bloods the skills of cattle raising and to provide them with a market for their hay. The program was no more successful than earlier efforts in agricultural training. Mixed-blood cattlemen protested that tribal resources were denied them because the tribal herd used the best grazing land. They demanded that the government distribute the herd on a per capita basis. Such a program nearly ensured that the cattle would ultimately become property of a few mixed bloods. Drought and the break in cattle prices after World War I ended the debate. By 1920 the government had sold the herd to reduce costs and the Blackfoot found themselves in their worst economic distress since the 1880s (NA, 1916a, 1919a, 1919b, 1920b).

The destruction of the Blackfoot cattle industry during the war and postwar years, coupled with the end of Blackfoot funds from earlier land sales, left most of the tribe destitute. Few had improved their allotments sufficiently to farm, and fewer had the resources to reestablish themselves in the cattle business. At its lowest point in forty years and a decade away from a time when income from mineral resources would partially alleviate conditions on the reservation, Fred C. Campbell arrived as the new superintendent. In Campbell, Hamilton faced his greatest challenge for tribal leadership (Wessel, 1979).

Campbell was an ambitious, imposing figure, who put his personal stamp on the reservation in the first months of his administration. He quickly gained an understanding of the reservation's problems. With the limited resources of the reservation, Campbell decided to concentrate building a subsistence level under the most destitute mem-

[p. 67-8]

657
233
458

657
233
422

657
233
458

657

657
433
241
179

bers of the tribe, the full bloods. In the first weeks of his administration, he visited every family on the reservation, making notes of specific needs and the family's resources. Over the next few months he developed a program to encourage full bloods, and any mixed blood who would join him, to begin utilizing the allotments. His idea was to break the psychological depression that gripped the reservation and encourage full bloods to begin some modest efforts in farming. Campbell never said what he thought the result of his program was to be, but in design its success meant developing a series of subsistence farm communities. He further instilled a sense of pride in the full bloods by acquiescing in their desire to gather for summer ceremonies. He compromised with the full bloods and gained their agreement to move the Sun Dance to a part of the summer when it did not interfere with necessary farm work. His sensitivity to the Blackfeet's deeply felt need to maintain continuity with their past through practice of traditional ceremonies quickly endeared him to the full blood community. It also presented a significant challenge to Robert Hamilton and the business committee, which for all practical purposes by 1920 acted as the tribal council. Hamilton had worked, for the preceding decade, to create a sense of community on the reservation, with the business committee as the forum where individual differences could be compromised into tribal positions. Campbell's success, while laudable in the short run, endangered that development and appeared a step back toward reliance on the federal government (NA, 1921a, 1922a).

The conflict that developed between these two strong-willed individuals was probably inevitable. Hamilton's opposition to Campbell's plan, however, was not based entirely on competition for leadership, but a genuine concern for the future of the reservation. Campbell's program, if generally employed on the reservation, would have had the effect of perpetually isolating the local economy from the general agricultural economy of the region. He was not interested in developing commercial agriculture, but expended his energies on establishing diversified agriculture

657
433
241
179

657
796
182
241

159
657
185

159
657
433
179

that looked toward self-sufficiency. It was an idea that had had some appeal in the frontier conditions of the nineteenth century, but could hardly anticipate economic advancement in the integrated national economy of the twentieth century.

Campbell's method of implementing his program was even more disturbing for Hamilton. The superintendent established a series of regional farm chapters on the reservation. The farm chapters organized the farming efforts of the full bloods and acted as cooperatives for equipment purchases. They also became local political clubs, where tribal members discussed general questions of reservation policy and arrived at decisions. Hamilton chafed under Campbell's domination of the farm chapters and the diminished role of the business committee (NA, 1922c, 1924a, 1924b).

Campbell had also moved to regularize the election of council members and established election districts along the same lines as the regional farm chapters. His influence with the farm chapters undoubtedly gave him some control over the election of council members. Since the council's authority was restricted principally to matters of tribal enrollment and approving leases, Hamilton found that real decisions about the use of tribal resources tended to drift away from the council and to Campbell's farm chapters. It also meant that tribal resources that might have been used to develop the mineral potential of the reservation were diverted to the subsistence agricultural program.

Through Hamilton's urging, the tribal council had pressured the Department of the Interior to approve the first oil and gas lease on the reservation in 1922, which went to Louis Hill of the Great Northern Railroad. The Hill lease had been loosely written and resulted in little exploration. Hamilton urged that the Blackfeet with the aid of the Geological Survey conduct its own exploration, while the Department of the Interior pressed for outside leases with such restrictions that no company was willing to engage in the effort. Another decade passed before oil discoveries of a commercial nature brought some relief

cused McCabe of fraudulently acquiring land from full bloods and obtained a federal indictment of the State Senator. Although a jury acquitted McCabe of wrong doing, Campbell made an issue of his friendship with Hamilton (NA, 1919c, 1926a, 1926b, 1926c, 1926d).

At the first meeting of the 1926 Council, Hamilton as the presiding officer inappropriately turned the meeting over to McCabe. McCabe forced a resolution out of the council condemning Campbell, and, acting beyond the council's authority, dismissed him from office. The Office of Indian Affairs refused to recognize the council's action and sent an investigator to the reservation. The investigation proved that the charges against Campbell had little substance and resulted in the Indian Office refusing to further deal with the tribal council. For several years the council had met on a regular basis, but after 1926 the Office of Indian Affairs insisted that it meet only at the call of the superintendent. Hamilton had apparently hoped that his extreme action would lead to an airing of the differences between his ideas for the reservation's future and Campbell's, but the investigator chose not to deal with substantive questions of reservation policy. By 1928, carrying the scars of two decades of political war with the Office of Indian Affairs and reservation agents, Hamilton refused to run for a council seat (NA, 1926c, 1926d).

Ironically, by 1928 Campbell had become convinced that the future of the reservation depended on the development of cattle and sheep grazing, a position that Hamilton had taken from the beginning. The allotment of the reservation into over 3,000 separate units, however, made it difficult to establish grazing on an economical basis. To assure adequate range, hundreds of leases were executed each year with individual allottees. Failure to secure even one lease could exclude several hundred acres from use in the middle of a grazing range and make it virtually unusable. The problem of multiple tenures interfering with efficient range management was not a problem restricted to Indian reservations. The difficulty existed throughout the State of Montana, where land within natural grazing ranges might contain

History and Identification of Blood Bands ⁶²¹ ₁₉₅

Hugh A. Dempsey

ABSTRACT

The history of band organization of the Blood Indians is presented, especially characterizing how the Bloods maintained their traditional band structure until well into the reservation period.

The Blood Indians are part of the Blackfoot-speaking nation, which historically inhabited the area from the upper Missouri River in Montana to the north Saskatchewan River in Alberta. A typical Northern Plains tribe, they had a buffalo economy until they were obliged to settle on their reservation in southern Alberta in 1880.

Like other Northern Plains tribes, the Bloods were divided into a number of smaller units for the purpose of hunting and food gathering. At certain times of the year, such as in winter or if the buffalo were plentiful in a particular area, all or most of the tribe might be found camped in one area. Within the large assemblage of tipis, the internal organization of individual bands was clearly defined. Similarly, when the tribe gathered together in a huge circle for the Sun Dance, each band had its designated position, with those from the northern part of the hunting grounds on the north side of the circle and the others in the south.

George Bird Grinnell, an invaluable recorder of the Blackfeet, stated that each of the tribes was "subdivided into gentes, a gens being a body of

*Hugh A. Dempsey, Glenbow Museum, 9th Avenue and 1st Street,
S.E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 0P3.*

[p.94-A]

29: Lismar E-5 (1939) 1974
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

residence, band, family connections, household, and societal memberships. These cards have been in my possession for many years and I shall be more than happy to make them available for study to any interested scholar. Finally, if anyone knows the present whereabouts of Max-jorie Lismar I would appreciate hearing from them, care of the Plains Anthropologist.

Esther S. Goldfrank

INTRODUCTION

Adoption, in one form or another, is commonly found in most parts of the world and yet its mechanics are seldom recorded in any detail. With the Blackfoot it is now a well established custom and the Indians themselves say it was frequent in former times.

The Blood reserve, where these studies were made in the summer of 1939, is an area of 800 square miles in southern Alberta near the International Boundary. About 1450 people are spread over the reserve, in scattered households, with related families tending to cluster together. There are, roughly, 280 of these households, varying in size from those where several families, either of brothers, or of a man and his married children, live together in the same house.

The more prosperous families often have two houses, a farm where they live most of the summer until after the wheat and oats are harvested, and another house nearer the range where their cattle and horses graze. This does not mean that certain houses are unoccupied for half the year. There always seems to be a relative and his family to be accommodated in the other house. Means of subsistence include grain growing, cattle raising, and horse breeding. Horses, however, are not a source of money to any great extent but are used for exchange within the reserve. Government rations and subsidies are given to families who cannot support themselves. There are about a hundred households on destitute rations. Compared with neighboring reserves, however, the number on relief is relatively low.

A feature of family life that strikes even the most casual observer is the fluidity of the family group. Husbands and wives change partners with great ease and frequency, especially among the younger people. Marriages are very informal in many cases and requires little formality for divorce. This is of special interest to our problem since this breakup of the family frequently leaves

128

597

[178]

101

131

[162]

[621]

361

592

221

361

433

434

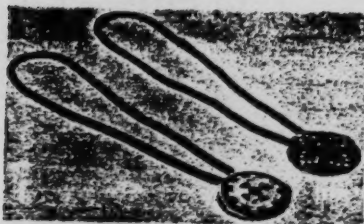
434

657

586

593

[p.24-B]



301
531

74. Beaded necklaces (modern).

of well made, genuine, useful Indian handicrafts.

The Blackfeet Craft Shop is a cooperative organization composed of Indian craftsmen and craftsmen living on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. Its governing body is a Council whose members are elected from its general membership. It employs its own Indian business manager. The Craft Shop buys the best raw materials at wholesale for resale to its members at low prices. A Buying Committee of handicraft workers passes upon all articles submitted for sale through this organization and insists upon high standards of workmanship, in keeping with the best traditions of the tribe. For example, all beadwork accepted must be sewn with durable sinew as were the articles made by early Blackfeet. Beaded designs must be in the older tradition of geometric forms, and not in the more recent floral patterns of alien origin. The committee determines both the selling price of each article and the amount the worker is to receive for it. The Blackfeet Craft Shop thus safeguards the purchaser by assuring him genuine, Indian, made handicrafts of high quality, worthy of the prices asked for them. On the other hand, it assures the Indian craftsmen and craftsmen of fair returns for their skilled labors.

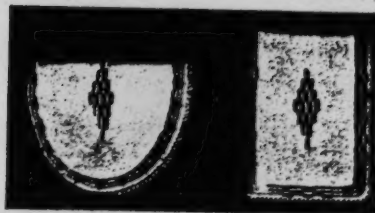
474
439
[178]

[178]

Modern Blackfeet craftsmen are not engaged in making mere souvenirs. They are making beautiful articles that anyone will be proud to own and to use. Among their most popular articles are attractively

433
441
178

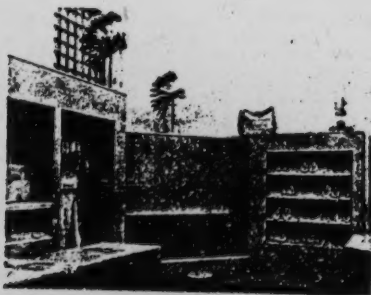
[P-63-A]



75. Modern coin purse and cigarette case.

tailored sports jackets in either Indian-tanned buckskin or commercial suede. The jackets are made in two different styles, both decorated with beadwork. Other popular articles are moccasins of soft tanned skin beaded with old Blackfeet designs, buckskin gloves, women's sport hats, beaded buckskin or suede coin purses, cigarette cases, playing card cases, and dolls dressed in traditional Blackfeet costumes. Blackfeet craftsmen also make a few traditional articles such as stone pipes, rawhide covered drums, and feather bonnets, which are of special interest to the collector.

These articles are marketed through the retail store owned and operated by the Blackfeet Craft Shop on the Park Highway near the St. Mary's entrance to Glacier National Park. They are sold retail and



76. Corner of the craft sales room in the museum.

(P-63-B)

484
1493 transportation is the pick-up truck, and daily, Indian families make the trip into Cardston or to one of the Indian communities to buy food, borrow tools, seek advice, or merely converse. This form of communication is of great importance to the Blood, and, to the ethnographer, it would seem that the great majority of Blood are on the move most of the time.

Blood Economy

433 The Blood Indian Reserve is not an economic unit. It is a space in western Canada in which a number of Indians attempt to sustain or advance themselves by individual labor and individual capital investment. These efforts are generally tied to economic variables off the Reserve. Very few Indians are attempting to advance up the socio-economic ladder by working for other Indians. All advancement must come from selling one's produce or services to the white men who control the local agricultural and livestock markets and production centers. Intra-Reserve economic exchange is generally limited to working for food, gift exchanges, haying, and the limited sale of horses. Working for other Indians, however, is practiced and preferred by some individuals, particularly the young men. It is generally the uncaptialized young man, without tractor, truck, or hay rack, that works for wages or a percentage of the net income on haying operations. Other kinds of employment of this nature are branding,

464

464 breaking horses, building and repairing fences, and "custom"
plowing or harvesting.

246 Haying is the most popular form of agricultural employment on the Reserve. It is popular because almost anyone can do it, and because there is immediate payment, intensive activity, and sporadic physical effort. Also, haying may be done on one's own allotment or any unclaimed Reserve land. Commonly the owner of the "rig" selects the area to be hayed. He then contacts relatives and neighbors who he thinks might be available. It generally takes a crew of from three to five men to work at the greatest efficiency, but men with less than modern equipment may work with as few as one other individual. The process is for one man to cut the hay (most hay is cut in circular swaths rather than in patterns congruent with fence lines or terrain) and then, when a sufficient quantity is cut, to rake it into piles. Then the other members of the crew are brought out, and their job is to stack the loose hay on the pick-up truck and the hay rack and tramp it into place. The hay is trucked [435] in this form to its destination for sale. Hay sold in this manner brings from \$15 to \$22 per ton, each truck and trailer load being around seven tons. Some Blood who have modern [433] equipment cut and bale the hay in one process. This eliminates a number of men from the crew and increases the operator's proceeds to over \$25 per ton.

657 Branch." The general purpose of this administration has been to make the Blood Indian self-sufficient in the modern world.

• 433 To this end the initial effort was to make small farmers or
654 cattle herders out of the buffalo-hunting Blood.²⁹ These efforts at small-scale agriculture and husbandry were largely unsuccessful with only 304 acres under cultivation by 1894.³⁰

871 The Government also authorized construction of Indian schools during this period, one of which, the Dunbow School, was built south of Calgary. The first principal of this school was the famous "black-robed voyager," Father Lacombe.³¹ This program met with as little Indian acceptance as did the farm program. As Katherine Hughes reports:

The main difficulty was that these boys were too old to be broken to school ways, but they were the only boys available. All winter they continued to be as wild as young elk. Sometimes they would turn the playground into a battlefield; more often they would slip away to a big hill a mile distant and play there well away from the shadow of the school. Occasionally the teacher on ringing the bell for his charges would not find one in sight. In an instant, or so it seemed, they had hidden themselves about the yard, ready to lope off to the prairie if the teacher would not come out to round them up. During the winter some of the boys ran home. When the spring came they all clamoured to be free.³²

433 In 1894 the Indian Affairs Branch made another at-
654 tempt to introduce cattle herding to the Blood, this time by accepting horses in exchange for cattle.³³ Cattle continued to be the major industry until 1910. At this time the Government again started a program of farming with some success

433 until the bad winter of 1919-1920 which annihilated the
[654] cattle herds and set the farmers back considerably.³⁴ These
natural catastrophies together with the world-wide depres-
sion of the 1920's had the effect of closing out the smaller
entrepreneurs and concentrating the bulk of Reserve land in
361 the hands of a few large farmers. Also, in this era some
of the bands, which had been the residential, economic, and
political units of the aboriginal Blood, were dismembered by
the relocation of those bands residing on the "North End" of
the Reserve into the communities of those residing on the
"West End."³⁵ The land freed from occupation in this fashion
177
[134] was then leased to whites for cultivation. The result of
these alterations was to diversify the socio-political organi-
zation of the Reserve, and to add a new source of income for
the populace.

Many of these trends continue today. Leasing is
[433] common. Indeed, less than ten per cent of the adult household
434 heads farm.³⁶ The major sources of income are from tribal
or individual lease monies and from the gathering of prairie
871 hay. Early trends in education have continued, but within
the last ten years the Indian Affairs Branch has made an ef-
fort to integrate the Indian student with the white student
156 in the non-Reserve schools. Also, status competition has re-
657 mained strong. In the recent past (1939) Esther Goldfrank

notes:

BLACKFEET RESERVATION105
493105
[192]

[409]

[368]
[365][366]
[368]
[521]
[525]
[162]
[464]**Vital Statistics**

Population:	
Indians residing on or adjacent to reservation:	6,216
Labor Force:	
Total:	1,353
Unemployed:	495
Unemployment rate:	37%

TRIBAL ECONOMY

Average annual tribal income is \$500,000. Ninety percent of this income is derived from minerals and 10 percent from miscellaneous sources. There are several industrial enterprises on the reservation, including a pencil manufacturer and a lumber cut-stock plant, providing employment for tribal members and income to the tribe.

CLIMATE

Rainfall averages about 14 inches per year. The temperature ranges from a high of 85° to a low of -20°.

TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Highway 89 runs southeast-northwest, and U.S. Highway 2 runs east-west through the reservation. Train, bus, and truck services are available on the reservation at Browning, while commercial air service is available at Great Falls, 125 miles away.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A large community building is available at Browning for various tribal activities. A modern library with 3,000 volumes was recently completed. The water system at Browning is municipally owned. Electricity is furnished by Glacier Cooperative and natural gas by Montana Power Company. The U.S. Public Health Service hospital at Browning provides medical care for tribal members.

RECREATION

Browning, gateway to Glacier National Park, is the principal reservation shopping center. This is also the site of the Museum of the Plains Indians, a nationally known repository of Indian artifacts. North American Indian Days are celebrated annually with dances, ceremonies, and a rodeo. In addition to Glacier National Park, reservation recreation areas include Lower St. Mary's Lake, Duck Lake, and other such areas.